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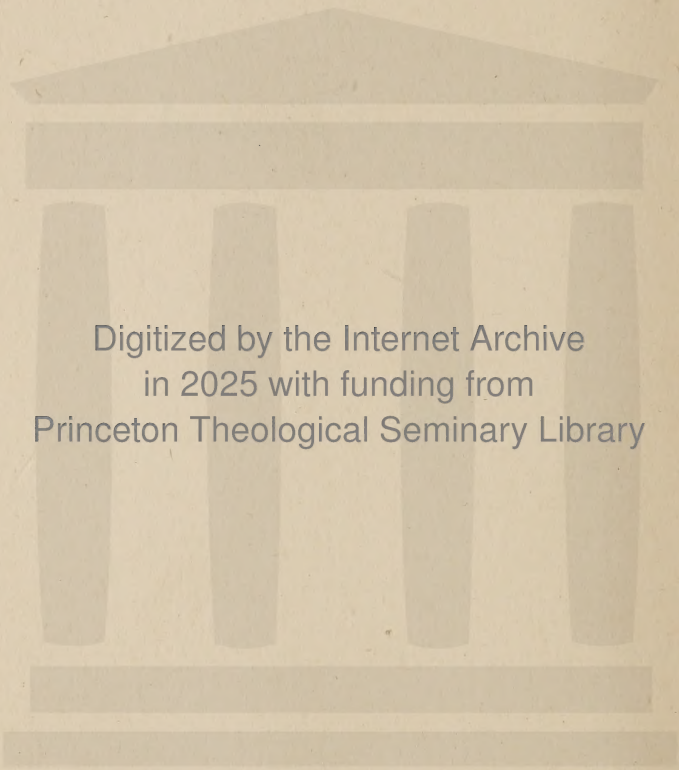
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DEC 11 1939

Florence Bingham Crooks

Tales of Thailand

Printed for the Author — 1942

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Printed in the United States of America

Dedicated to my sister
CORNELIA ELIZABETH BINGHAM
who sustained us by love
and prayers the years we
were on the field, and now
makes the publication of
this book possible

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Introduction

To one who goes to the mission field the gates of a new life in a new world are opened. Since this really marvelous privilege is his, he should to the best of his ability share it with those who have made the experience possible. When we started for our field in 1904, Miss Ellen Parsons, who was then editor of *Woman's Work,* said to us, "Remember, your first duty with your pen is to write for your mission magazine." No one could have been more positive or convincing than Miss Parsons was, and we have tried to fulfill her commission, one of us with the typewriter, the other with the pen. This book consists of a collection of articles written during our thirty-seven years of service in Thailand. In this connection we wish to express our thanks to *Women and Missions, Everyland, The Thailand Outlook,* and *The Presbyterian* for permission to reprint. Also there are many stories in the book that have never been published before.

Many friends in missionary and club groups who have read and listened to our accounts have urged the publication of this book. They share with us the hope that, with the blessing of God, it will open to the home Church a vision of the greatness of the task and the urgency of the call to Christianize the Thai race.

There are no more fascinating stories in fiction or in that truth which is stranger than fiction than the stories of the mission field. They are second only to the marvelous stories of the Bible. Indeed may we not truthfully call them "stories from the second book of The Acts"? All mission work, no

matter what branch, is truly a spiritual quest, pointing the path to heaven and guiding those of earth aright. The missionary knows no greater joy than to declare the blessed Gospel. To do this he must be great of soul, in simplicity, in faith, and in love, so that he can take the common things of life and walk truly among the people. This was our conception of our task.

We have endeavored to give true characterizations of the persons mentioned, real descriptions of the country, and effective narrations of the events seen. We wish to acknowledge our debt of gratitude to the Thai people. We shall never cease to be grateful for the many beautiful lessons we have seen lived out in the lives of the Thai Christian people whose paths have crossed ours.

During our thirty-seven years of medical work in Thailand, we have been in four different Stations. Hence we feel that our views may be counted as fairly comprehensive. Twenty-seven years we spent in Lampang, where we built up and established the first self-supporting hospital in the Thailand Mission. Not all our time, however, was given to medical work. At times we took over the schools. Bible women's work was carried on continually, together with market, chapel, and church work and village visitation. When the Lampang Hospital came under the control of the National Church, we spent a term of service in Nan Station, where we continued our usual work. The hospital there also was put well on the road to self-support. For assistance in this work we wish to thank especially our home and supporting church, the First Presbyterian Church of Kansas City, Kansas, which supported us with many generous gifts and ceaseless prayer; we wish to acknowledge also our debt of gratitude to the women of Shenango Presbyterial Society in Pennsylvania for the really wonderful overseas supplies which they sent to the two hospitals for many years. There are many other friends, too numerous to mention here, whose gifts and prayers will be ever in our remembrance.

This book is not intended to be an exhaustive study of the

Thai. It is, we hope, a clear picture, drawn at close hand by us who, because of our relationships with the Thai, know their admirable qualities and their grace and charm of manners. They are worthy of our love.

As the tragedy of war draws down the dark curtain over this peace-loving people it may seem to some that the story is ended. But the student of missions knows that someday the tangled threads will be straightened out and the underlying strands will stretch far across the sea, binding the National Church of Thailand to the great Presbyterian Church of America, which has never deserted and never will desert its work there.

These little stories, and the mission message, will bring cheer for times dark and starless and let the reader live for a time in the lives of these Thai men and women — people of great simplicity of character who are lovers of music and flowers and all that is good and beautiful in life. If we read them they will surely help us to have " songs in the night."

CHARLES H. and FLORENCE B. CROOKS

Saint Augustine, Florida,
September, 1942.

Part One

Foreword

For years Thailand has been one of the least known countries of the world. In the past, few people outside of Presbyterian circles were able to give a really intelligent opinion of the Thai people. Even among Presbyterians there are still some who do not as yet realize the high devotion and really splendid accomplishments of those in our own missionary circles.

The achievements of Presbyterian missions in Thailand since their beginning in 1840 are marvelous indeed. In that century Thailand was progressively transformed from a medieval civilization to a modern and in some ways a model nation, and members of the royal family never failed to give the missionaries full credit for their part in this transformation. On more than one occasion the highest officials, before distinguished audiences from all over the Orient, have acknowledged the debt of thanks to their friends the Presbyterian missionaries.

Few people realize that the Thai are a widely spread race, and that in reality there are more Thai outside of Thailand than in it. The history of the great Thai race has not yet been completed, but enough is known to show that it will be both splendid and honorable.

I

Who Are the Thai?

Who are the Thai? The Thai are an ancient and honorable race older than the Hebrews or the Chinese. The Chinese do not like to acknowledge that the Thai were a very civilized and widely spread race when they themselves arrived in China. This was before Moses was born or Troy or Athens were founded, not to mention Rome, which was founded some eight hundred years later. The Thai must have been very important indeed to be recorded in the most honorable ancient history of China as "The Great Mung." This honor they already had when Egypt was being established. Their first home was north of the Yangtze River, and therefore they are not indigenous dwellers of the tropics.

Ancient history shows that at times the Thai revealed remarkable military qualities, giving excellent account of themselves in battle with the Chinese but only in defensive warfare. They certainly had no love for war, and this is the key to their history. As time went on the Thai, hating warfare and being constantly embroiled in feuds which often broke into real war, as a testimony of their love of peace took up their beds and marched south and ever southward until, after many centuries, they reached the lower tip of Siam. Through the dreary successions of war, reprisals, conquest and defeat, and at last in the quiet peace of Thailand, and in spite of all the tangling of the threads of history, the innate Thai characteristics have persisted, the same under whatever flag, in whatever clime. Those who still live near the Yangtze, the millions around Canton, and the millions in Yünnan and other places, all retain the innate qualities of the race. They are people of delightful

simplicity, of laughter and a merry heart, of open-handed hospitality coupled always with a respect for women and the high position accorded them. There is a beauty and grace of manner, unfailing courtesy, and a love of music and flowers. The Thai, no matter where they are found, are lovers of the drama; any of them can act, and not a few of them have dramatic talent of high order. In musical drama they are perfect rhythmists. There has never been any impassable gulf fixed between the masses and classes.

To make a real study of the Thai, however, we must study them in Thailand. Here they are divided into two distinct groups. Those in the plains of the south have been called the Siamese. The group in the mountainous country of the north is called the Lao, which was the ancient name of the Thai when they lived by the Yangtze, and they are best entitled to this most honorable name. The Lao people have had less contact with other peoples, speak a purer language, and personify all the innate qualities and embody all the excellencies of the race. To understand these Lao people one studies the women, around whom all life centers.

As to the religious life of the Thai, Buddhism came to the Thai people in Siam from Ceylon. Spirit worship they brought with them from their ancestral home in China. Buddhism is an outer veneer. Spirit worship lies deep in their hearts and is always supreme.

The government in Thailand in the early days was divided into petty provinces ruled by feudal princes; in these latter years three dynasties in three different capitals have risen and fallen but the fourth, in Bangkok, established its power over all Thailand some 160 years ago. Thailand was an absolute monarchy until 1932, when it became a constitutional monarchy.

In size Thailand is equal to France. It measures 1,025 miles in length and 437 miles at its greatest width, with 200,000 square miles in area. There are low plains in the south and mountains in the north.

As for the flora, when the Thai arrived the whole delta was a vast jungle, and 70 per cent is still jungle, forest-clad. There are rich teak forests in the north, also forests of redwood, oak, and chestnut. Lofty evergreen forests and extensive bamboo are found in many localities.

Two words, farming and rice, describe the livelihood of the people. To appreciate the importance of rice one need remember only two facts: Rice is the principal product and the staple food. Rice furnishes 70 per cent of the exports. There is little scientific farming, and few modern irrigation plants, yet Thailand excels in the quality and quantity of its rice. One twentieth of the country is under cultivation. Other sources of wealth are teakwood; tin from the south; some lead; meager gold from gold washing; some sapphires, at a premium in quality and size; rubies; and the semiprecious stone the popular zircon. The waters abound in fish. Fish, rice, and fruit form the diet of many.

In considering the fauna of Thailand, the foremost place must be given to that noble animal the elephant. Once wild, then captured, he became the limousine of the nobility; later still he has rendered valuable service in the teak forests. Among the Thai the elephant is an object of great affection, and he deserves it as he is also affectionate and wise beyond words. Next to the elephant the Thai love the water buffalo, which is an exceedingly ugly animal but affectionate to the family. He plows the fields. The jungle teems with wild animals, and Thailand is called the paradise for birds. The cat family is headed by that ferocious animal the tiger; contrary to general opinion, he rarely attacks humans, but certain tigers do and these take a heavy toll, in a year's time, of human beings. There are many members of the cat family — the leopard, the panther, and an endless variety of jungle cats. Then we must mention the famous Siamese cat, the aristocrat of the cat family, an adorable pet. There are two kinds of bears — the ferocious black bear and the small honey bear which makes

such an amazing and whimsical pet. In the jungle there are also wild boars, wild cattle, and other animals far too numerous to note here.

In the snake family there is the python — a snake that likes to live in gardens and around settled places. Recently in Bangkok one was found entering a palace. He was nineteen feet long and seemed amazed that he was not welcome. These snakes will fight if attacked, but only if attacked. The king cobra is probably one of the most vicious of snakes. His usual length is six feet, but some are much longer. His bite is deadly. The other varieties of poisonous snakes are the coral snake, the krait, and the viper.

Generally speaking, there are three seasons in Thailand. The cool season extends from the middle of November to the middle of February, the hot season from the middle of February to the last of April, and the rainy season from the first of May to the middle of November. A record over the space of eighty years shows an increase in the extremes — it is now hotter than formerly in the hot seasons, and cooler in the cool seasons.

Thailand is a country of small villages. There is only one really large city in Thailand, Bangkok, the capital. The next city in size is Chiengmai, the old capital city of the north, which has perhaps 50,000 people, certainly not more.

An excellent railway system runs the full length of Thailand, with a few branch lines. Where there is no railroad, the Government has built excellent motor roads.

In recent years the Thai nation has been on a good financial basis. Exchange is based on the British pound sterling. Britain has floated Thailand's bonds, and the financial adviser is British while the legal adviser is an American.

The following are a few general facts to be remembered about these interesting people:

The Thai changed their habitation but continued their history.

There is a delightful absence of antiforeign sentiment among the whole Thai race. They do not assume that they are a superior people.

The Thai are receptive to whatever appeals to them, no matter where it comes from.

No experience in Thailand, from birth until one has drained the last drop from the cup of life, can be undertaken without consulting the spirits.

II

Building the Kingdom in Thailand

The missionary project in North Thailand began in 1867. The opening of this long-secluded field reads not unlike the story of Abraham. The founders of this Mission also walked by faith, for they knew little of that isolated country and the river voyage which was the only path to this unknown land.

Does the Presbyterian Church do well to forget these heroes whose lives should be a never-ending inspiration to us all? There was a time when the names of Dr. Daniel McGilvary and Dr. Jonathan Wilson thrilled our Presbyterian congregations as real heroes of the cross and great messengers of the Gospel in that most distant point of our mission fields. Can anyone tell us when it was that our great Church began to drift away from the interest in and the work of these and other heroes of the cross? Herein is the calamity because this touches the most significant and vital task of our Church. It has no counterpart. It is paramount. It rises above all else, unique and outstanding. Helping to fulfill, and following the works of those who fulfill, the Great Commission quickens the spiritual life of the Church. As the Church shares it grows, and

only those who share can grow, and only those who share know. These converging claims of the Church are its supreme opportunity and privilege. In our present dark world no lights shine so radiantly as those which gleam from the pages of the lives of the early missionary heroes of the cross and the magnificent work which has been established on the mission field. More than ever in these critical days our Church needs the inspiration of these missionary heroes and the marvelous facts of what has been accomplished. Those who peruse these stories will receive a rich reward. Great visions give great peace.

With this in mind I should like to share a few incidents of mission work in North Thailand — incidents that show how the dawn has come to that land and what the progress is.

It was a picture of clouds and sunshine when the first two Christians were beheaded outside the city wall one dark night. The darkness passed, and the sun shone with splendid radiance as the blood of these martyrs became the seed of the Church, for the hand of the Lord was with the Mission and churches grew and multiplied all over the north. It is a thrilling and inspiring story. Alas, that it should be forgotten! Churches, schools, and hospitals came into being as the founders visualized the great human needs.

There have been three distinct eras in the North Thailand Mission: first, the planting of the Church; second, the establishing of it on a firm foundation; and, third, the fruits of the labor. When my husband and I arrived in the north of Thailand in 1904, the first era was drawing to a close and the second beginning, although not so far along but that we had distinct visions of what the first era had been. In the last decade of our services we had the unspeakable joy of seeing some of the fruits of the labor in the splendidly trained young national leaders who are taking their places in all departments of mission work and as heads of important institutions. When I think of the fruits of the labor I always have a mental picture of the three generations of Christians whom I have known. In our first

year in Prae Station I remember so well a certain Christian woman, strong in faith but absolutely having nothing of what we call education. Her daughter, nurtured in the Lord, learning but not being really educated in the first schools, nevertheless had a much wider horizon than her mother. The child of this daughter was really educated and graduated from one of our modern Christian schools. She took the course in the Nurses' Training School and then in the University of Bangkok. She is typical of the new national leaders. When we left Nan Station in May, 1940, she took my place as superintendent of the wards and the nursing staff of that hospital. Let me add here that this woman has still retained the deep faith and the spiritual depth of her mother and grandmother. We rejoice that this is true of all these splendid young national leaders.

Three of the mission hospitals in North Thailand are now under the supervision of national Thai doctors. The young Thai doctor in charge of the hospital in Lampang, which is the largest and the first of the hospitals supervised by the nationals, has recently been in this country for postgraduate work. In the universities where he studied he received great commendation for his medical knowledge and surgical skill. Also in the churches where he spoke he was a great inspiration and his grasp of spiritual values was a marvel to all who met him. These are types of the new national leaders in the medical work.

When we arrived in Thailand in 1904, all the preaching in the Station churches was done by the missionaries. In the country churches the nationals, who were elders, attempted a brief explanation of the Scripture lesson if there was no missionary present to do so. Today in these large Station churches it is rare indeed to see a missionary in the pulpit. The national pastors of these churches are, as a rule, college men, graduates of the theological seminary. They conduct the services with dignity and poise, and their sermonizing is much to be commended. As we observe these new pastors in the pulpit, and

in their pastoral care of the flock in sorrow and death, we praise the farsighted planning and the constructive action that moved forward to produce these marvelous results. It all lived first in the vision of the founders of the Mission.

In the country churches, for the most part, the pastoral duties are still carried on by the elders. This is a unique feature of many Oriental country churches and works with surprising efficiency. Many of these elders have had some training in the seminary in pastoral care and a simple course in homiletics. A few of the larger country churches have in recent years installed pastors, but these austere elders are very careful to keep the ruling power in their own hands. This is true even in the large city churches. There was only one real church building when we came and that was in Chiengmai. The other congregations met in temporary buildings of bamboo.

In the second era, along about 1925, when the work was being established, a great project of church building began in the country churches. The bamboo churches were replaced by lovely structures, some of wood, some of brick, and some of stone. The funds for this really wonderful project were raised on the field — each church helping the other in turn. This building is still going on in the faraway country churches, such as those in Nan Province.

The Station churches have been built by funds from home, supplemented by what the city congregations could give, which in each case was marvelously generous. Some of these Station churches are handsome buildings with lovely grounds, fit temples for the living God.

As for the educational work, we find that the children of the first converts were the first pupils. These schools began on the veranda of some missionary home. When the veranda became crowded and the noise intolerable, the school moved to the inevitable structure of bamboo. So the schools moved from veranda to bamboo, from bamboo to wood, from wood to brick, and this marked educational progress all along the line. If we

might take the first little bamboo school and place it beside the beautiful buildings of Prince Royal's College or on the spacious new campus of the Bangkok Christian College, we should then have some faint idea of the really marvelous progress that our educational system has made. In it all these missionary and national educators have been true to their real purpose – the training of Christian leaders for Christian service. However, they have also stretched out a helping hand to many boys and girls who were not yet of the household of faith and led them to find the better path of life. All this too first lived in the vision of the founders. At the present time most of the didactic work in the Station schools, as well as in the institutions of higher education, is carried on by the nationals. Some of the Station schools have national supervisors.

The Mission in North Thailand exalted evangelistic work. The founders of the Mission in North Thailand, or the Laos Mission as it was called for many years, found a people searching for the truth and pleading for salvation, a people who had had all the deep human problems that chain those who are without hope. Their road of life was a hard one, often from physical suffering and always from the fear of spirits. The more thoughtful longed for the Saviour whom Buddha had told them was to come. This Saviour, the Buddhist scripture said, would have feet and hands pierced like the lotus blossom. " This is He," they would often exclaim, as they listened to the story of the cross and believed this deathless story of redeeming love. God had prepared their hearts.

As for their physical sufferings, they are often scourged by smallpox and are continually plagued by malaria. Eradicating smallpox and bringing great relief for malaria were the first two projects of the medical work, and led later to the founding of five hospitals. However, the preaching of the Gospel always was a counterpart to the medical work, with converts won and villages opened to evangelism. How wonderful are God's ways in leading his people!

And what more can we say in this brief sketch? Volumes could not contain all the marvelous stories of converts won, of churches, schools, and hospitals established. Does someone inquire, "Why have these stories not been written up?" The answer comes, "They have been, and are waiting to be read." O that the Church would reread once more the glorious lives of these early missionaries of Thailand and other lands! I would suggest the reading of a book on the founding and early days of the Mission in North Thailand. It is entitled *A Century Among the Siamese and the Lao,* written by Dr. McGilvary and edited by one of this country's most distinguished educators. Do I hear someone exclaim, "What, read a book published in 1910!" Yes, Homer's *Iliad* was written sometime before that and does anyone refuse to read it because of this? The book I recommend is not only a classic, but a book glowing with spiritual zeal.

There are many other books on Thailand and the mission work. The Board of Foreign Missions will be happy to make pertinent suggestions on books to read. Read them in these days of darkness and you will see how splendid man can be at his best, inspiring us to live up to what is noble and renewing in our hearts the Lord's Great Commission, without which our Church must perish. In the blood stream of our Church there is still the love of missions, but it needs a tonic, the prescription for which has already been indicated.

Part Two

We Who Served Together

For the ideal missionary project there should be the closest possible association between the home supporting church and the missionary. The need is mutual. Together they should grow in grace, and they will grow in grace if they work together. The emphasis is on *together,* and will anyone deny that the lack of this is one of the most prevalent and most dangerous weaknesses in our missionary project? This section of the book is not meant for the glorification of the Florence B. Crooks Guild — its members do not need this and much less would they desire it. It is placed here in the hope that it may be a help and inspiration to hundreds of other splendid women of the churches, that they too may catch a vision of what can be done when groups in the home church work together with their missionaries over an extended period of time.

I

Farewell to Our Sponsors — Florence B. Crooks Guild

" There was not one city too strong for us: the Lord our God delivered all unto us."

As I rise to speak to you this evening, I am aware that it is to us all a momentous occasion. It is a parting of the ways which we have traveled together these many years. You must go on to greater endeavor while I must turn into a new path, the path of retirement. But tonight there shall be no shadows to darken our last joyful occasion. Rather, I wish to rejoice over the many years of loving friendship, and the inspiration you have been to me all these years, while I have tried to represent you on the mission field in Thailand. Few missionaries have had the joy of such a group – this I very well know. Such friendship as we have had never ends; the memory is sacred forever. The common task, like a golden chain, has bound our hearts together.

Not being good at dates, I do not know how many years we have been working together. Then too I do not want to know, much less mention it, lest someone might imagine that some of us are growing old. What is time to us? And, for that matter, what is time anyhow? It is only the hands of the clock going round and round; it has no connection with us. We have been bound together by a common purpose and the tasks we have set before ourselves were many and various. None of them were easy, and indeed some of them seemed impossible, yet these were accomplished facts in the end. So tonight the words of Moses come to me as he reviewed the victorious history of the people of Israel and exclaimed in triumph: " There was not

one city too strong for us: the Lord our God delivered all unto us." So there was not one task too strong for us. The Lord our God delivered them all to us.

One victory led to another, and all this working together in the Lord's tasks has helped us to grow in grace as we have seen our ideals so beautifully, so nobly worked out in the lives and hearts of those whom it was our joy and privilege to prepare for God's service. It was your vision to help to prepare someone to live out in Thailand the ideals of your own lives. Here was a mighty city to be taken. Was there a way? Oh, yes, it was accomplished. But, lest we appear to boast, let us return to the message of our text: "The Lord our God delivered all unto us."

We were determined that not one thing, however difficult, however hindering, should be too strong for us. However, there were times when our ideals for the task appeared to melt away and come to nought, but at that point the Lord always turned apparent defeat into victory. Now we can see it all as time unfolds and we see God's will worked out. Now what a wonderful inspiration, what an impelling power, is the blessed assurance of our text as we review the past and look forward to the future! No matter how hard the task or how seemingly impossible it is, you will remember there is not one task too difficult for you if God is with you.

Boon Pan was first. She was a maiden beautiful in face and form, so quiet and reserved that one had to guess what was going on in that calm and dignified personality. When you gave her the opportunity to go to study in Bangkok, you opened a door which she never dreamed would be open to her. She meant to repay well her debt of gratitude. She was an excellent student.

Soon after she began her work of teaching, she married an official very high up in his position. He was almost at once transferred to another province. As the pages of history unfold, we now see that the aunt who raised Boon Pan compelled

her to marry. When this occurred so suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, we were stunned. It appeared to be a city of disillusionment indeed. Our high ideal appeared to have melted. However, that is only a casual opinion of what time shows to be a more beautiful picture. "Time will tell" is a wise word, and I caution you always to remember this in your missionary projects.

Boon Pan became the wife of a high official, but she always had a school. Apparently her husband acquiesced in this strange arrangement. People often said, "Why do you bother to have a school?" Always the answer came, "It is my debt to the Lord." Her beauty, her grace, her spiritual life shone out in all official receptions. She did not drink, smoke, or gamble. "Why not?" people asked. "My God constrains me!" Like Joseph she lived in the midst of worldly people, but she refused to compromise with them, and no one could penetrate that quiet dignity. So life went on for Boon Pan. Her face retained its beauty, but time put a pathetically saddened expression upon it. It was the sadness of regret. Then death came and blessed relief.

Does the story end here? No, let us read on.

Several years ago a teacher was needed in the Girls' School of Lampang, and this was discussed in the school in Pitsanuloke. A young teacher in the school, by the name of Boon Ying, mentioned it casually to her father, a retired official, at the dinner table that evening. He listened carefully to his daughter's story; when she had finished, he said, "Boon Ying, you must be that teacher." "O father, why should I go?" "Because you must go to take your mother's place. I robbed that school of Boon Pan, your mother. I shall now repay. You must go to take your mother's place." Thus do we know that Boon Pan never forgot, nor did she allow her husband to forget. Boon Ying is a fine Christian woman who is now married and has established a Christian home. In February, 1940, I met her and I know you would be proud of her.

The next student you helped was Fong Kaao, a different personality, animated and impetuous. When I taught her in 1913, as a little girl of nine, she was exceptionally good in English. She was in Bangkok longer than any of the other students that you helped. After she graduated, she proved to be an excellent teacher and was a great help in the music both in the school and in the church. Then, after some years, Romeo appeared. This particular Romeo was a Chinese dentist, an excellent man, but as usual we were reluctant about presenting him with one of our teachers. Now from the end of the road I can look back and smile at the many times I have written to you of the calamity that was falling on us when one of our teachers was getting married. It really did not make much difference as they generally kept on teaching. Fong Kaao did. However, there was another fly in the ointment — or it looked like a fly to me — Fong Kaao wanted to be a nurse, that she might establish a maternity home. Finally she went to Bangkok to take her course, and now her great idea is accomplished. So her life goes on in this nursing home where poor mothers and rich alike find care. She still takes her place in the classroom if an emergency arises. Her church is her urgent responsibility always and her home is the gathering place for the Christians. Yes, Fong Kaao is one of the leading Christian women of Lampang City church, and you can rejoice in her.

Sri Kam was the next girl, and she was in Bangkok only a year and died a few days after her return home. What a calamity death seemed when it took our leaders, always too few in number at any time! But now I know that death is sweet release when the task is done. The Lord had a peculiar mission for Sri Kam. It was to live the Gospel so beautifully that no one could doubt the power of the Lord Jesus to transform a life. This meant something in a school like that in Bangkok, where few were brave enough to proclaim themselves Christians. Sri Kam was the daughter of the pastor in the Lampang City church. Nothing but a fine Christian home could have

made a life like Sri Kam's, and the Lord needed such a witness.

The next project was the raising of a thousand dollars. How impossible that seemed, but how great was the need! One dark, rainy night a call came to Dr. Crooks from the railway station three miles distant. There was no motor car but a horse and carriage waited at the gate. Did any of you ever ride in a carriage? Well, at least, I know you never rode in the like of the one waiting at the gate. The horse went by leaps and backward sways. The rider was thrown forward and bent together like a jackknife and then thrown to the back of the seat bolt upright. After three miles of this one had the impression of having done some rather violent setting-up exercises. The patient needed an immediate operation, and when at last he seemed out of danger the doctor started home. There was as much water inside the carriage as out and it was cold. Halfway home on the dark road, the horse fell down dead. Did the driver have an umbrella? No. So the doctor waded through streams of water, with rain coming down in torrents overhead.

I wrote to ask the ladies in the missionary society for a car, but it seemed as impossible to them as it did to me. So I wrote to you, for you had never failed me. And this time you did not fail me either, for back came the money. It was not so simple as that, because it took work and time, but come it did. And from this thousand dollars, as a nucleus, three cars have been bought during three periods of service. We always called these cars " Madam Guildie." The third madam is still going strong. These cars have brought hundreds of patients to the three hospitals that have been served.

We now come to one of the most remarkable achievements of any group not only in our First Church of Kansas City, Kansas, but in our great Presbyterian Church throughout the land. I refer to the gift of ten thousand dollars which you raised for the hospital in Lampang. Wherever I tell this, it is sure to produce a gasp of astonishment and remarks such as these: " It seems as if it could not be true." " How did a group of young

women do this?" I answer, "They had the will to help." However we know the things already accomplished that led to this in these stories that I have retold to you. When Dr. Leber, of The Board of Foreign Missions, made his tour of the Orient, he said that one of the most striking achievements that he saw on his trip was the self-supporting hospital in Lampang, one of the most beautiful buildings in Thailand. This was our memorial building, which but for you would never have been built. We have every reason to rejoice and every reason to feel the deepest satisfaction in the work we have accomplished in establishing this first self-supporting hospital in Thailand. Being workers together, we accomplished the tasks which came to hand.

I have touched only the high points of accomplishment and what you have done for the work and for Dr. Crooks and myself personally. In our home in St. Augustine we have many lovely gifts which you have sent us at Christmas — precious daily reminders of your love. The magazines and other reading material which you sent us in Thailand were not only a joy to us but to all in the Station. And the many letters you wrote us, giving the news of the church and homeland, how we welcomed them all through the years! You were all splendid to write but I know none of you will be envious if I mention Ethel in particular. We all know she is the perfect letter writer. As I look back over the years this and that which you have done form a perfect avalanche which passes before my eyes and I could rhapsodize for hours if only the clock would stop ticking and not insist that it is getting late.

The years ahead will call for vaster effort than the past, for the work is only begun. Great and marvelous as the achievements of Christian missions have been, we must realize that only a beginning has been accomplished. I know you will always keep alive in this church the mission cause. This group has carried the mission work soul and body. This is a glory to the older women of the church. You are their daughters.

As to the mission work, we know that if we do not share we shall die ourselves. It was not for nought that our Saviour put the Great Commission at the end of all commissions. He knew that if we failed there we too should perish.

And now, dear ones, farewell.

Part Three

The Gospel of Healing

MEDICAL missions have two great objects, the medical and the evangelistic – the former being a means to the latter. It is not too much to claim that medical work in the north of Thailand was like a golden wedge opening up the hearts of the people to listen to the gospel. The sufferer relieved from his pain was apt to say to his doctor, " Show me your God, for I will worship Him too."

There has always been the closest co-operation between the medical and evangelistic departments. Working hand in hand, they have established many of the churches and Christian groups. The first small hospitals have now been replaced by handsome buildings with all the modern equipment. For the thousands of patients treated each year the ideal has always been " a contented mind, a healed body, a saved soul."

I

Little Stories from Life

Life in a hospital in the Orient is always interesting and vivid. Like a real thriller in the cinema, it keeps one guessing about what is to come next. It is apt to be fatal to take anything for granted, for the very opposite thing from what you do is usually what the patient wants.

There was Crystal Drop, who was so unbelievably small that she was scarcely even a drop. She was two years old and weighed but eleven pounds. At first she used to greet us with an " upward tilt " to her voice, which is the way Lao children register extreme disapproval. Then, happily, she began to link us up in her mind with the good food from the diet kitchen, and shy little beginnings of a smile replaced the cross little grimace and the mad little squeal. The operation showed that instead of one calculus, which would have been one too many for Crystal Drop, she had two. But wonders never cease here, and how could anyone guess that such a tiny scrap of humanity could go through a major operation and not have a bad symptom! After that for two weeks she woke to eat and ate to sleep like a drowsy little worm. Like a cocoon she was transforming her ugly, bony little body into something wonderfully beautiful. At the end of two weeks her mother came in from her village to visit Crystal Drop, but she scarcely recognized the child. It really is amazing how these children acquire flesh when they have the proper diet.

By this time Crystal Drop felt so well that she had fallen in love with everyone including herself. All the members of the medical staff were her devoted slaves. Her recovery made a great impression upon the people in her home village, not one of whom had dared hope that she would recover. Now, well

and strong, she is a living testimony to the healing power of God. Her father said when he left the hospital with her, "I believe that Jesus is the true Saviour," but he was not willing just yet to take the final difficult stand and to break away from the traditions of his family.

One morning as I went into a ward a new patient said to me, "You do not remember me, do you?" There was something vaguely familiar about him, and because I knew that he would be disappointed if I answered, Thai fashion, "Yes, I do not remember you," I thought furiously, and the sensation of experiencing a great disappointment assailed me. Then the memory of it all came rushing back. "But I do remember you," I answered, "You are from the Sixth Village, are you not?" "You do remember me!" he cried with great satisfaction. How vividly the scene from the past came before me! In that very room this new patient's father, who was a prince, had been so ill. His case was hopeless, but before he left the hospital he made a confession of his Christian faith. When he insisted on going home to die we feared that he had renounced his newly found faith.

"My father died a Christian," this new patient assured us, "and bade us bury him without any spirit or temple ceremonies." He must have had but vague ideas about a Christian burial but he insisted upon having it.

"Did you not make any offerings for your father after his death?" I asked, knowing that they must have been sorely tempted to do so.

"None at all, as he forbade it," the son replied, adding, "But later when mother died we offered one small book for our father."

A sister who was present added naïvely, "We knew that father was in heaven so we thought it would not make any difference to him, and mother asked us to do it." Thus did they salve their consciences.

The comforting point in this story is the thought that many who in our hospitals hear the Gospel hide it in their hearts and believe. The visible results are not at all commensurate with the effort, and so we have this hope in our hearts. It is amazing, however, how some, despite the bitter prejudice and sin about them, reach out and grasp the truth, and like Enoch, walk with God.

Recently one of the Christian women in a village became blind from cataract. The other women in the village often said to her: "Why do you serve a God who allows you to go blind? None of us are blind." She was very patient and never complained, and she only told the women that in due time she would go to the hospital and God would restore her lost sight. This they refused to believe, of course. But she did come to the hospital, and her sight was restored. Her greatest joy was in seeing her children again, but she was also delighted that her neighbors could see in her restored sight the power of God to heal. Thus, in her affliction, she preached the message of God far more effectively than she could have done by word of mouth. Many people heard of the marvel of her restored sight and came from far and near to see if it were really true. These heard the Gospel stories of healing read with the eyes of one who had been healed.

II

Mrs. Missionary Shuts Her Eyes

It was the second day of the new year and Mrs. Missionary sighed as she thought about her yearly missionary article not yet begun. If only she might have an hour alone! But the

patter of bare feet on the veranda announced callers. They were former patients in the hospital, gratefully bringing the first fruits of their harvest to Dr. Missionary. Mrs. Missionary had done little else for days past than receive and teach such visitors. Finally the last caller had gone and the day ended with a visit to the hospital to see a tiny patient whose precious little life hung on a slender thread. Then home to make up the food for the patient and the work for one day was done!

"Too cold for visitors to-night," thought Mrs. Missionary, as she betook herself to the kitchen and the only fire in the house. To enjoy a kitchen in the Orient one needs to be stone-blind. Mrs. Missionary closed her eyes and thought about her various callers in the past days as she remembered them in the hospital — the lame, the blind, and the bandaged — not a very beautiful crowd to look at, but precious to those who had seen them grow back to health and strength once more.

Before the closed eyes passed little Golden Crystal, like a fragrant little flower with her bright, wistful face. How Mrs. Missionary had looked for that sweet little face to smile up to her in the daily chapel service! Sometimes when she first came her face was drawn in pain but always sweet and brave. Slowly the light of the Gospel story entered into her heart and one day she said to her grandfather, "Golden Crystal believes in Jesus truly and wants to become a Christian." Since then her little hand has led her family to Christ. Her grandfather, a man of rank, is now a most devoted Christian and exerts a great influence.

Then there passed Dr. Missionary's adopted son — the son who adopted the doctor! The first time Dr. Missionary met his son it was to put thirty-six stitches in him and to set a broken arm. One might suppose that Ba Tune would have been discouraged after that first reception, but not he! Ba Tune had had an encounter with a buffalo — hence the stitches. For two days he was almost unconscious; then the tide turned and he began to mend. He was a quaint little lad and a favorite with

all in the hospital. One day he said to the head nurse, " Does the doctor have buffaloes? "

" No," said the surprised nurse, " why? "

" Very good," said Ba Tune, " from now on I shall be the doctor's son."

When Dr. Missionary heard of the new member of his family he laughed, but when Ba Tune's mother heard his decision she said, " Just as you say, my dear child; Jesus has healed you, it is only fitting that we should serve him." So the whole family came into the Church. Ba Tune has started his education and altogether Dr. Missionary has great reason to be proud of the son who adopted him.

Nan Wong was one of the head priests in the temple, a young man of excellent report. Everyone loved and respected him. His father had hoped to make great merit through him. But Nan Wong was ill and became a terrible sufferer. The spirits were consulted; offerings of all kinds were made. The family possessions dwindled away but Nan Wong only grew worse.

" We will go to the foreign doctor," said his father. So Nan Wong took off his yellow robes, put on citizen's clothes, and came to the hospital. It proved not to be a spirit after all that was afflicting him: he was a victim of vesical calculus. An exceedingly large stone, the size of a hen's egg, was removed and Nan Wong's gratitude knew no bounds. Well educated in Buddhism, he recognized in Christ the fulfillment of the prophecy of Buddha, and he and his father became firm believers. Nan Wong said, " I have been healed through the power of my Saviour; how can I return to the spirits? "

Then Mrs. Missionary saw the vision of another yellow-robed priest whose father brought him for treatment. When Dr. Missionary told him that it was too late the father said, " Well, if he dies here I shall have nothing to regret." So they waited the sad end. One day, after being unconscious for some time and recovering, to the astonishment of all, he began to pray God to take and receive his soul. And until his death, which

came soon, he lifted his hands in supplication. When the end came, the father, with a pleading look on his face, asked: "What think you? Will your Saviour accept my child with his yellow robes on?" Assured that the robes would make no difference, he said: "So I felt, for in no other way could I explain the joy in my heart. I feel my son must be in heaven and I am too happy to weep. I marvel at myself that here my son, who has been my great hope of merit for years, is gone and I have not shed a tear. Only faith in the Christian religion can give such joy."

Thus Mrs. Missionary sat and recalled the patients of the past year: some of them wholly indifferent to the Gospel story; others, through fear, not opening their hearts to its influence. There were several patients of high rank who occupied the best ward in grandeur. There was the "Mellin's Food baby" of the Thai official, with her six nurses. It took all six of them to fix the bottle. There was the little boy who cried lustily every day when the chapel service was over because he wanted Mrs. Missionary to play some more on her sewing machine! There was the old Chinese whose sight was restored after an operation for cataract, who never came to the city without some gift to show his gratitude to the doctor. There were many who, having spent their all on the spirits, came to the hospital, not only to be healed but fed as well. Many of them confessed their faith in Christ. They were recalled with smiles and tears — dear children, all of them!

III

The Princess Moves In

Mrs. Crooks's writings always throw so much light on Thai matters inside and outside of mission circles that we are giving our readers

some extracts from her personal letter, received with the following story of hospital experiences: " Dr. Crooks and I are enjoying our little vacation on the mountain, so I have had time to write this story and he has copied it for me on his Corona. I have enjoyed the leisure here as I have never a minute I can call my own at home — not that I would have it otherwise. I have prepared twenty lectures for my hospital classes [This is leisure indeed! — Editor.], have had some time to cook — a thing I can rarely do — and my husband and I have had wonderful tramps over the mountains. How I wish I could share with you the exquisite orchids which make our little bamboo hut a perfect bower of loveliness! This is a new summer place and the tiny house has a roof made of leaves, which the wind delights to tip up so as to let in the rain. When the winds blow and the rains descend, we are likely to be as wet inside the house as out. The walls are of double bamboo split, so full of holes that we could throw the family cat through them almost anywhere. But, with our new railroad, we can reach this high spot in four hours from our home, which seems very near, and next year we can make some improvements. . . . We are rejoicing in our pure water supply at the hospital from the new waterworks installed this year, though deeply disappointed that we are not to have the new hospital building to which we have been looking forward. But the outside medical work has been making great progress, with the help of Doctor Crooks's fine new motor car, the gift of the wonderful Guild girls of our home church, the First Presbyterian of Kansas City, Kansas." — *Editor of* Woman's Work.

Mrs. Missionary and the head nurse were on the rounds of ward inspection. This is an ordeal for Mrs. Missionary, but the patients view it from another standpoint. Nemesis steps into their ward and everyone begins to tidy up before the storm breaks! This inspection is a continuous adventure and the nurse is often heard to complain, " One would think we make rules only for the fun of seeing them broken." There are short, snappy scenes and long painful ones. The inspectors aim to carry the defenses by storm and a prompt capitulation is expected. At first the patients might all well wear the placard, " Pity the blind " — to an untidy room. Some of them doubtless intended to obey but the room says it not. Yet there are tidy souls like manna sent from heaven in the wilderness. We

must not forget to record these. Mrs. Missionary spends her leisure mixing new kinds of flattery, which she spreads over them with a whitewash brush. The desire is to keep everyone clean and happy but it does not do to go on the naïve assumption that the cleaner people are the happier they will be. The idea may sound orthodox but here it unfortunately does not happen to be true.

The nurse, in his stiff white apron and cap, a model of neatness, pads along ahead, opening the doors. With great dignity, as if he were going through a ceremony, he gets down and looks under each bed and critically round the room. Mrs. Missionary looks up; cobwebs are her objectives. Down one row; every ward spick-and-span, every patient just as he should be! The nurse smiles. A smile after all is essentially a fleeting thing and in this case the evanescent expression was replaced by a grimace and this by wild consternation as the next door was opened.

The trouble was that the nurse and Mrs. Missionary had had a mental picture of that room. It had been prepared for a patient who was coming in on the evening train. It was only the joy of looking at something tidy and clean that had made the nurse open the door at all. To their surprise it was already occupied — every inch. There is no use of trying to reproduce that room or dress it up in our rhetoric. Mrs. Missionary's first impression was that it was an attempt to drive her insane. The mattress had been dragged from the bed, the clean, fresh linen wadded up on top. On the bed, sitting in state, was a puffed-up creature — but again words fail so we pull the blind here and simply say that two weeks later, by the use of warm water and ivory soap, a princess emerged from this cocoon. This outer covering had been forming for three months we were told. There was no doubt that the information was true. The nurse did not recognize the princess but he knew the rules of the hospital.

Had she had a bath before she came into the ward? "No," with the clear implication that she had no intention of having

one. Who had entered her in the hospital? "No one. Why should anyone enter a princess in the hospital?" Didn't she know she could not bring her own bedding and all this stuff along? The nurse indicated the contents of the room with a scornful sweep of his outraged eyes. The princess was amazed. How could anyone exist without betel boxes, et cetera? The princess listened politely to the rules of the hospital. They were interesting but queer, and she had already heard them from the ward nurse. She was adamant on the question of getting off the bed. "Here I am and here I stay." She reached for one of the offending boxes and looked off into space with that finality so provoking in the Oriental. The interview was ended so far as she was concerned. Peace fell on her shoulders like a warm coat. They were at liberty to go on with the inspection if they cared to.

The princess had wanted to come to the hospital for a long time. She had arrived. She was not interested in any casual details. Her first bloom of youth had passed her by as she stood in the shadow of a long illness. But she was determined that she was not going to die until she saw whether life had anything which it meant to give to her. There was a dear secret hope hugged to her heart, which she did not even dare to breathe to herself. She had tried everything that the spirits had to offer and now to her people this was a mad idea, a slender thread of hope to hold to for a dying girl, but she had an air of covert triumph. She had sold her birthright of fresh youth to the spirits, but now there was a patient, obstinate striving for something else and she was determined not to fail.

Gradually the little peevish lines of long suffering began to smooth out from the princess's face and she began to put out shy little tendrils of returning health. The rules of the hospital, which she had looked upon with such mild contempt, meant something to her when she discovered that they were the roads that led to health. It was as if she had died and been born again.

And now we will glance into the record book of the hospital where the history of the princess's case is written up. We shall take, however, only one sentence: " A complete and satisfactory recovery." " You may go home now," said Dr. Duang Chune, who both enters and dismisses the patients from the hospital. As the princess had entered herself in the hospital, she considered it quite superfluous for the doctor to dismiss her, so she said: " I'm not going home. I am a Christian. I cannot and will not live again with my people." Did her family object to her becoming a Christian? It was well known that she came from a bigoted Buddhist family. There was a kind of fire behind the princess's eyes like red coals. This question gave it a puff and it blazed forth. Her expression was a blend of astonishment and fury: " I intended to become a Christian when I came here. Don't you suppose they knew? "

It is interesting to note how some minds seem almost to create themselves and work their way through a thousand obstacles in this land. Her relatives had built a fortress of living defenses around her to keep her from this. Feuds there are in this country but sickness is the oasis on which they meet without thought of rancor or ill will, especially if anyone is thinking of throwing over the family spirit. The elderly princess, her mother, however, did not seem so much to object as she presented the picture of a distracted hen watching her duckling swim.

If she were not going home would she kindly indicate what she intended to do? Yes, she intended to join Mrs. Missionary's household. Dr. Chune could not repress a smile. He wondered how we would receive the news. We received it like a wild phantasm from the Arabian Nights. It was the princess herself who again saved the situation: She would sew on the doctor's buttons! When Mrs. Missionary recovered from her amazement, she decided, " If she is handy with a thread and needle and can cultivate an eye for missing buttons, she may be a treasure." Mrs. Missionary was tired of pouring verbal

oil over the so frequently troubled sea of missing buttons.

The princess joined herself to the household and ambled around sedately, undisturbed by the flighty crowd about her. Now and then she trilled out a laugh that was curiously musical and girlish. Her eyes became bright, her cheeks, rounded out, began to show the glow of health. "The princess is getting to be pretty," Mrs. Missionary remarked to the doctor; later, "The princess is really beautiful." "Pretty is as pretty does," the doctor replied each time. You see he was thinking of his buttons and was well pleased.

One day Mrs. Missionary came home from a morning in the operating room. She decided wearily that work should give place to rest. She went up to her sunlit parlor and shut her eyes wearily, when a polite cough announced the princess. "Oh, come in," said Mrs. Missionary in a tone meant to be cordial. The invitation however was superfluous as the princess was already in the room and sat down confidentially near. She was experiencing a moment of exquisite felicity and these symptoms could mean only one thing. There could be no hurrying this interview, for long and devious are the ways of conversation leading to this particular climax. So the princess carried on like an amiable gramophone leading up to the grand finale. There seems to be a screen made up of pieces of misunderstandings between the Oriental and Occidental minds and each word seems to be a fresh patch in it. So the two talked, screened from each other, neither seeing into the mind of the other. Then came the last whirl and name of the happy man!

Somehow Mrs. Missionary had never associated the princess with marriage. She had hoped that she would float along in single blessedness. The happy man himself sat in an agony of apprehension in the background — the background being under the old tamarind tree, whence he cast shy glances up to the sunlit parlor. The princess assured Mrs. Missionary that his proposal was no effusion of fancy but a faithful transcript

from his very heart — this because Mrs. Missionary had called her to look upon the fickleness of the present generation. The fact that the princess herself was of the present generation had been forgotten. "It is not good to build all your hopes on a foundation that you do not know, especially one four years younger than you are." That was the one and only objection Mrs. Missionary could find. The princess smiled and gave the usual answer. You can show a Lao woman all the difficulties of the married state, all the possibilities of friction, and she will settle the matter with her favorite conclusive word, "I know." Accustomed to live only in the present, they use every pleasure as soon as it presents itself.

So Mrs. Missionary, being utterly without ammunition, and knowing that they would be regulated by their own ideas anyhow, capitulated to the princess, gave her her blessing, and sent her down to the tamarind tree radiant with joy!

IV

Mrs. Missionary Takes Charge

Long before the eye of day appears Dr. Missionary is up and away. Mrs. Missionary comes down to her solitary breakfast. Presently a soft patter announces the approach of the table boy. First, he has a disdainful look on his face, which is the first act of the charade he is about to present. Secondly, he solemnly lifts his left hand and wiggles his fingers. "Very well," says Mrs. Missionary. "If the eggs are in that condition we shall dispense with them."

Breakfast over, Mrs. Missionary hurries upstairs, saying to herself, "I must get that letter off first, then —" "You certainly have not forgotten to mix up the bread," comes a polite

call after her. While the bread is being mixed, a shadow appears in the kitchen door and a small boy comes in. He bows, flourishes a bottle — charade number two! Mrs. Missionary guesses, "Food for baby brother." A telephone call comes from the head assistant at the hospital, who asks reproachfully if Mrs. Missionary is not coming to help with the hookworm clinic.

The hospital staff are all lined up in the improvised laboratory, looking very solemn. "Has anyone died?" asks Mrs. Missionary, thinking that could be the only thing to account for such a funereal atmosphere. "No," says the head assistant. "No one has died," in a tone of voice indicating that if anyone had died it would be a small matter compared to the present calamity. He waves to the microscope saying, "There is something in there and we don't know what it is." "Dear me!" says Mrs. Missionary, "what a calamity to science to have something rare like this appear and the doctor not at home." "That's the way it always happens when he is gone," remarks the second assistant. "I have it," says the head assistant; "I'll draw a picture of it and doctor can then tell us what it is." So the rest fall to and finish the tests.

Then comes inspection of the wards. When each patient is received, he is put into a spick-and-span-clean ward — no doubt the cleanest he ever saw. His attendants are given a lecture on the beauty of cleanliness. The same lecture is repeated every day when the rooms are inspected. This is Mrs. Missionary's part of the inspection, and goes something like this: "No, you must not keep your wood under the bed. Why is the patient down on the floor?"

"He is not accustomed to sleep on a bed; it is not pleasant."

"Put him on the bed at once; pleasant or not pleasant he must stay there. Have you swept your room and wiped up the floor as you were told? Well, no one would imagine it. Suppose you try it again."

The people are no doubt bored to distraction; the West must

teach the East to clean up. When the doctor is away, the head assistant takes his place in the inspection, examining all the new and old patients, while the head nurse gives in the report of each patient since the last inspection. First come the surgical wards, and with wonderful skill and soft, sure touch the head nurse dresses these cases. In other wards are fever, dysentery, dropsy, et cetera.

Mrs. Missionary finds a crowd of people congregated on the veranda of the middle-class ward. A smell compounded of iodoform, chloroform, and something boiling comes from the operating room, which the second assistant is preparing. When Mrs. Missionary comes in sight, he gestures wildly at his throat, his chest, and his back, raising two fingers. " Two patients and pretty bad," Mrs. Missionary guesses, as she hurries down the long veranda to the operating room. The hospital staff clean up and the first case is brought in. A dozen of the relatives come in too. Mrs. Missionary assures them that an operation is in the nature of a private affair, without invitations, but one person may come in — so the father comes. With skill born of much patient training, the first assistant operates. Mrs. Missionary, as she hands him the instruments, glows with pride.

The gong rings, calling all to the chapel service, where the principal message is always, " This God for whom you have longed, the same we proclaim unto you." Service over, a number of people are waiting to be examined, so Mrs. Missionary does not again see her household until long after lunch time. Not that the household shed any tears over her absence — quite the contrary! However, they are grieved that she is so late to lunch. The rest of the day Mrs. Missionary spends between her household and the hospital. A baby is brought in unconscious, a hysterical woman must be calmed, food must be prepared, and so on. In fact, the day Mrs. Missionary takes charge is marked with every kind of experience except monotony!

V

The-Blessed-of-Heaven

Some people believe that the world owes them, not only a living, but all sorts of good things as well. Such, no doubt, was the sentiment of Boon Chuie (The-Blessed-of-Heaven) when he appeared at the hospital with only a sweet smile to pay his bill.

He had come from a distant province, and the motor car driver had given him a free ride to the city. So naturally he expected a free ride in and out of our operating room as well! His sole possessions in life consisted of the afore-mentioned ingratiating smile and two scant garments draped over his bony little frame.

When Mrs. Missionary presented him to the doctor as a prospective surgical case, that medical man drew in a long breath, letting it out in a soft whistle, and then inquired: " Is there no limit to the absurdity of the things I am expected to do? How could anyone operate on a bag of bones like that? " Then he added hopefully: " Say, this is a good subject for the diet kitchen. He might prove a spectacular case."

And he did! The diet cooks loved him. He was none of your dainty epicures, looking disdainfully at the plain hospital fare and then off into space to indicate that the interview with food was ended. He was in reality a " natural-born eater." He always seemed to have a watchful and eager eye out for any manna dropped in his wilderness of hunger.

No need here for the diet nurses to wring their hands in despair and exclaim, " If you do not eat your food I shall have to call the Maa Lieng [Mrs. Missionary]," and thereby start a long and provoking argument, such as:

" And what will the Maa Lieng do when she arrives? "

"Do!" exclaims the exasperated nurse in a horrified tone. "Why, she will take a spoon and feed you like a baby!"

The conversation should end here, and as a rule does, but some brave souls continue, as one Chinese patient: "I should be mortified to death to have a foreign woman feed me with a spoon!"

Instead of all this, one could hear the diet superintendent exclaiming as she inspected the trays, "And whose perfectly huge dish of rice is this?"

"Boon Chuie's."

"Who ate all the fruit left over from supper last night?"

"Boon Chuie."

"And for whom is that great dish of chicken? There are at least two portions in it."

"That's for Boon Chuie."

Perfectly honest cooks, who would not take a thing in the world for themselves, fairly stole food from other patients' mouths for this little lad, who all the time looked at them so demurely and drew them with such cunning.

So, in due time, came the day for his free passage in and out of the operating room. It seemed ages until the operating room doors were thrown open and The-Blessed-of-Heaven was rolled out on the stretcher. The tired faces of the surgeon and nurses showed that a grim battle with death had been in process and victory was still in the balance.

He could have died so easily that night, but — perhaps one of the diet cooks slipped in and whispered about all the delicacies hidden away in the cupboard, or it may have been the skill of the surgeon, or it may be that the Lord has some special work for Boon Chuie. Who can tell?

So he was nursed back to life by his devoted nurse, ably and enthusiastically assisted by the support from the diet kitchen. On the seventh day he was propped up in bed for five minutes only.

From then on, in rapid succession: "Boon Chuie is up!"

" He came to chapel today! " " He has been over to see Mrs. Missionary! "

Then one day Boon Chuie went to church to make a public confession of his faith. The nurse in charge of the linen closet ransacked the supplies for his apparel. He looked quite angelic as he sailed along behind the nurse who had him in tow, and five bright satangs jingled merrily in his trousers' pocket — these the nurse had given him with instruction to put them in the offering.

So The-Blessed-of-Heaven came among us, and with open heart and mind saw and took all that was good around him. From the very first he seemed to be one of us. He had the manner and attitude of one not far from the Kingdom. Perhaps he could not tell himself when he was born into the Kingdom, but he knows and has great joy in being a child of the Lord. And we too joy over him, this little lamb of the fold, with exceeding great joy.

VI

We Begin Anew

When the Mission asked us to come to take over the hospital in Nan, it meant leaving system and order to come to utter chaos — chaos covered over with fifty-seven layers of dust and dirt. After thirty years we must return to the beginning and start afresh. The Nan hospital was like a patient who had waited too long for a doctor to come to his aid and had thus utterly collapsed. But some collapsed patients can be restored — and this one was.

We have always thought archaeology one of the most interesting of the sciences, but never did we dream that we too should be members of this distinguished society. However,

when we began to dig into the buried treasures of the Nan hospital, we realized that we had arrived. If we were to write a real, candid story of what we went through, it would read like some fantastic dream.

Not many layers had been removed before a few surgical patients began to arrive. We were not ready for them; neither did we dare to send them away. We imagined that if the beds and bedside tables were clean, they would not mind the appearance of the walls. There are three wards in the hospital, only one of which had a real floor. The other two had floors, but these had been eaten by white ants and weakened by dry rot until they were like swinging bridges when walked over. Once when a surgical patient was being rolled on the truck, one of these floors went down several inches. Fortunately it caught someplace.

We never knew when we left the hospital at night whether in the morning we should find our patients where we left them or down in the cellar. Finally these floors were replaced by cement floors, and also, gradually, the whole hospital has been cleaned and brought to a routine of neatness and order. The hospital building is small, but generally adequate to the needs and fairly well equipped.

Usually when a hospital has been left for some time with no resident surgeon, the first cases that come are apt to be those who have waited too long and are therefore hopeless. We *had* to make ours live. These were to be our advertisements. A dead patient is nil as an advertisement, and all reasonable explanations as to why he died are "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Moreover our patients were even more concerned over living than we were, if that could have been possible. Nevertheless they all expected to die. As the assistant said, "You will find the Nan people are very much afraid of an operation." We found it! On the day of the operation the relatives clearly showed, by their faces, that they thought all was over except the burial. The patients them-

selves had long brooded on their expected end. Such morbid fancies are not good as constant companions and are especially bad preparation for a surgical operation. So against all this we had to begin our work.

When we finally persuaded our first surgical patient not to die, we felt that an important milestone had been reached. We kept him as long as possible, as Exhibit A to all who came later. Gradually the nervous tension preceding our operations has lessened. The majority of our surgical cases have been vesical calculus (stone of the bladder), but there has been a good variety of other cases as well. Some of these cases have been most interesting. One was an elderly man of sixty-one, a most honorable man in his village. He was also very devout and a most zealous searcher for merit. Since he was religiously inclined, the Gospel message touched and awakened a very responsive chord in his soul. He went to the operating room with a smile on his face. He was even able to give a little imitation of a smile when he was brought out. Because of his age he had some rather serious complications, but he never ceased to call on the name of the Lord Jesus and was calm and serene in his heart. The contagion of such courage was quite amazing. It seemed as if the whole village came along with him. That has been one of our trials — the sympathetic friends who come along and who delight to sit around on the veranda minus their jackets; however, we tactfully and firmly insist on clothes. The recovery of this man made a very good impression.

It was a great day when the first child came for the vesical calculus operation. There are many little children suffering from this but the parents refuse to believe that they are, so they die in the most acute agony. This little boy, whose name was Tha Kam (A Golden Eye), was by no means delighted to see us. Life had been one long series of pains for him, and his first sight of a foreigner did not appear to ease him greatly. The first time I bathed him I remarked to the Thai assistant,

" This child seems to be paralyzed; he is as stiff as a board." The assistant smiled and said, " He is paralyzed with fear of you." When the boy recovered his breath, he screamed, " Wash me down south." Down south meant his honorable feet. He was a poor little bag of bones when he came. It was a happy day when we bade him good-by, and his little face was filled out and rosy. He had learned to sing the chorus of " Jesus Loves Me " and to answer, " Jesus," when asked who had healed him.

The uncle and aunt who brought him, for he was an orphan, were lovely people and so devoted to him. They had not been with us long when we realized that they had had some connection with Christianity. It is sometimes amazing how even a very distant connection marks the one who has had it. They did not open their hearts to us for some time. They had drifted, and could well say: " I fled Him, down the nights and down the days. . . . From those strong feet that followed, followed after." The agony of this little boy whom they loved brought them back to Christian influence again. They never told us about the tragedy that had come into their lives and caused them to hide in this far-off place. We did not want to hear that. It was enough that they were glad to come back to their Lord, and their joy was very touching as they took part in our chapel service.

One Sunday afternoon a young man arrived in the hospital from a distant province; he too was a vesical calculus patient. When the chapel hour came, he picked up a hymnbook and sat down in the group of Christian workers. He was a stranger to all of us, but he appeared to feel very much at home himself. He was at home. His story turns back the pages of time thirty years and more. At that time his father became a Christian, but because of violent opposition he openly renounced his new faith. However, in his heart and in his life he was a devout believer. All that know him testify to that. This young man was born years after, but his father's life and teaching had been such that he was at home in a Christian group. Before the

operation the father came, and he was of the finest type of Lao men. There was no fear when this young man was operated on. He made a splendid recovery. But best of all both the father and the son are now ready to make a confession of their faith.

One day as Dr. Crooks was walking down the veranda of the hospital, he met one of the assistants coming out of a ward. His face was contorted as if he were doubtful whether to laugh or weep. The story was this: Inside the ward a spirit doctor was rubbing a coat over one of the beds to capture a little element or spirit that had escaped from one of his patients. The coat belonged to a patient who had left the hospital some three weeks before, having recovered from an operation. He was having fever at his home, so the spirit doctor decided that he had lost one of his vital elements and that it might still be on the bed — he hoped so at least. The only trouble was that the assistant had pointed out the wrong bed. That was, however, very fortunate, because on the right bed was a hernia case, recently operated on. The doctor had already lost a lot of sleep trying to convince the latter that he had nothing to do but live. If he had had any suspicion that a little spirit was creeping around on his bed, Dr. Crooks would have been under the necessity of beginning his arguments again. We never heard how the man in the country got on without his spirit. He doubtless recovered when he thought it had been returned, and the hernia case recovered in spite of it. How wonderful the imagination!

That the people would show deep appreciation for nursing care, clean beds, and hospital clothes was quite unexpected by us. That a good proportion of the over five hundred in-patients, since we arrived, have been Christians, and that some of these have, with great sacrifice, made laudable remunerations to the hospital has been a very welcome surprise.

The financial situation of the hospital is the problem on which its future depends. The Nan people in general have

less cash than those in other provinces of the north — not *some* less but *much* less. However, every large Christian center needs a hospital. We who have established these centers are responsible for that. The Nan Christian community is fully as worthy of this as any other Christian center. The home church will have to subsidize this hospital for some time to come.

VII

Let Us Be Frank

It seems to be always the general impression that the mission hospital has pre-eminently the highest opportunity for presenting the Gospel message. If we look at results, especially in recent years, we shall without doubt be somewhat disillusioned. Let us say at once that any mission hospital is simply the reflection of the doctor in charge. This is such a truism that the one difficulty is to put it definitely enough. A doctor may have a mechanical and perfunctory routine, characterized by petulant bursts of righteous anger when a hopeless case comes, in which the spirits have had the first chance.

Instead of this perfunctory and mechanical individual, we may find a doctor who conceives of his patients as having their thoughts directed to the things of the spirit world. These spirits, they believe, are the power and the authority from which sickness and death come. Why, then, should they not invoke the spirits in dealing with sickness and disease?

Also, why should it be so difficult for the doctor to present to them God, the all-powerful and loving Spirit, and to say, " He healeth all thy diseases." A man like this gives dignity and glory to any mission hospital even though it may be a very small one.

The mission hospital has a unique position because of its continuity of personnel, its intimacy with the people, and its intensive knowledge of local conditions, and because of these it has a direct and special contribution in the evangelism of the people. However, we may not pretend to believe that it does always make this highest contribution. Even in the interests of a noble project, pretense cannot change actual facts. Perhaps some of the doctors, even when they started out with this high vision, have lost it because they have forgotten that not many mighty and not many famous ones will be found among their converts. In their disappointment they become more and more absorbed in the secular work, the hospital becomes complicated, and this clutters up the picture and makes it impossible to keep the supreme object always in sight.

Not all, by any means, lose the vision, and not all the converts are from the poor and lowly. There are on occasion men and women of wealth and distinction and even some from "Caesar's household." Also the poor and lowly convert at times rises to influence and power under the inspiration of his new belief. The limitations of space forbid many illustrations, but these to follow could be multiplied.

There came into the Nan hospital one day a man so utterly poor and wretched that, whatever fate might do to him in the future, it could not drive him much farther down. He was direct and simple in it all when he very cheerfully reported that he had nothing to pay for his treatment and no food to eat. Altogether he seemed as carefree as anyone is ever permitted to be in this care-ridden world.

When the period of hospitalization was over and he was normal again, his understanding was not easily penetrated when the national doctor hinted at a little work to reimburse the hospital for his operation and care. He smiled humbly and spoke softly in regard to this, but there was always a beautiful economy of words, and work too for that matter. For several days the doctor built his hopes high on getting Nan

Kuna to work, only to have them sorrowfully descend again. The doctor finally indignantly demanded of Mrs. Missionary an expression of opinion on such a man. As to his laziness, she had really exhausted her ability to be shocked over that. But she had seen a look in this man's face and a beam in his eye during the chapel service, and because he was intelligent and very careful and thoughtful in his attitude, she had begun to hope. So she tried to soothe the doctor and suggested that an attempt be made to live together a little more amicably until something should turn up. The situation was certainly not without a touch of absurdity.

But in devious ways the Lord calls these people, even the humblest ones. Later Nan Kuna made a simple but sincere confession of his faith, and how doors do open up when the Lord's time comes! One of the pastors had a large orange orchard. For some reason, just then, he needed a caretaker. With some trepidation Mrs. Missionary recommended Nan Kuna. The pastor accepted the offer kindly and did not ask any embarrassing questions, though he well knew that some were due. Nan Kuna himself was highly pleased. Had Christianity meant anything to him? It certainly must, for the pastor is a man of stern astuteness, with a rigid devotion to duty for himself and all his household. He would never tolerate any slackness in his beloved orchard. Nan Kuna is still the caretaker and not one word of complaint has been heard in the two years that he has been on duty. Every Sunday finds him in church. This year he passed through the "Golden Gate" as a reward for perfect attendance at Sunday School. He has the respect of all the community. His is a life transformed.

A young prince came into the hospital one day. He was accompanied by a woman who very greatly needed a major operation. The prince said that he had met the woman when he was on a trading journey. Aside from this he knew nothing of her except that her name was Lady Green. He also made

it clear that beyond this mere introduction he had no responsibility. After these brief remarks he subsided into silence and the lady in question cleared her throat and began her story.

After much explanatory preamble and many exclamations of dismay, with lifting of eyes and hands, we got the impression that Lady Green's worldly possessions were the shabby clothes she had on. We noted when she came in that she had a very languid manner and sat down with the air of "Here I am and here I stay." She appeared to be trying to make the most pleasing effect with the least effort. She was, in fact, a person with a past history of great suffering. She seemed to feel that most of her life would be in the future if she could be cured. Certainly the past had held little joy.

So she was entered in the hospital and her general health built up in preparation for the very serious operation ahead. A great attempt was made to allay her fears, which were many and various. The morning of her operation she was heard carrying on the following soliloquy behind the shelter of her bed screen: "I am not afraid to die! Who says that I am afraid to die?" No one had said so, of course, but she was trembling with fear when Mrs. Missionary went to lead her to the operation room. Her journey to the operating room was probably the most vivid and memorable trip she ever took. She had indescribable sensations of reluctance to enter that door. Two sensations were fighting for mastery — the old fear of the spirits and death and the sensation of the power and love of God for her. The latter won. She entered the door of her own accord and Mrs. Missionary very softly closed it behind her. Her fate was sealed.

Later on Doctor Missionary broke the intense silence which he always demands in the operating room to remark, "Ah, a beautiful growth!" as he gazed on the tumor with the air of a connoisseur examining an old masterpiece. At the end of an hour as Lady Green herself would have expressed it, the Spirit of God had banished the evil spirit from her body and

now she had only to travel the long road back to health and strength once more.

And no wonder the dazzled woman listened to the magic power that had wrought this marvel! At first she liked to take Dr. Missionary's hands and rub them on her forehead and say, "These are the hands that made me well." Only he would not allow her to do that. She learned to say, "The Lord Jesus healed me." Her faith was very simple and direct. The spirits had been very real to her. Like the blind man whom Jesus healed, her faith was so complete that there was no avenue for doubt to enter.

And why are we so supremely happy over the winning of this one very simple and lowly convert? An only answer is that such an event is interesting and thrilling according to the drift of one's sympathy.

Later on, the Government doctor came to visit the hospital and saw Lady Green's scar from her operation. He exclaimed from a professional standpoint, "What a beautiful healing!" meaning, of course, the scar. We answered, "Yes, it is a beautiful healing," meaning the scars of the spirit. He could see only the scar, but we looked at Lady Green's face radiant with joy from the real healing.

These two pathetic life pictures are truly typical of our converts, but others too, of higher stations in life, crowd my mind. There was the young Thai Army officer whose heart was touched and who is now an influential leader in one Christian community. There was also the old prince who lived and taught many years after his conversion. He is now with the Lord, but his conversion and his life made a profound impression in his community. Then there have been converts who in themselves were humble Christians, but whose children, nurtured in the Lord, are now in places of influence.

The opportunity for presenting our one great object is ever present in the mission hospital, and so the important question is, "What are the impressions that these strange people get of

us, and, more important still, of our religion?" These people, so warm in heart and ever so polite, but minute and merciless in their analysis of our characters — what do they see? and especially if we become so absorbed in the secular work and seem so unable to leave it while we do what we really came to do?

Alas, there was a time when the number of converts from our medical work was larger than at present! In recent years it seems to have been resting on its wilted laurels. Perhaps the zeal will awaken, but how late! This record is something that all of us who have to do with medical work need to ponder. Yes, bitter indeed are some of the pills of humility and even more of humiliation if we do not awaken and put our hands to the task.

None of us are brave enough to attempt to read out loud the lessons and applications of what has gone before. However, they are there for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Nevertheless some commendable efforts have been expended even in recent years. We can still place hope in the fact that there is some smoking flax which will some day be fanned into flame. This we say in spite of the fact that visible results are still the best cordial for drooping spirits. Jesus is deeply loved in secret and from afar by innumerable people who have been in our mission hospitals.

VIII

From Moonlight to Moonlight

The midnight gong was ringing in the quiet village of Nan when Mrs. Missionary suddenly awakened. It was a glorious moonlight night. Shimmering beauty shone across the deep greens of the compound, on through the palms to the

hospital beyond. " Why do I sleep in all this beauty? " she asked herself. Then a soft cough from below showed her that it was not, after all, the beauty of the night that had aroused her. Another cough, and an apologetic voice inquired if " the princess " was awake. Interpreting the princess to be her humble self, Mrs. Missionary responded that she was, and what did they desire below?

There was a series of little polite coughs and then, would the princess kindly awaken " the great one "? Mrs. Missionary smiled, because " the great one " meant Dr. Missionary, several times meeker than Moses. However, it was a pleasure to comply with the request.

It appeared that someone was very ill. The story was vague and the messenger frightened, either from this his first contact with the great one or from the condition of the patient. The cordiality with which his request to bring the patient to the hospital was received from above encouraged him, however, and his voice was almost cheerful as he begged to take leave of them. " We bid you go! " said the voice above.

Work must begin early that morning for Mrs. Missionary. The one and only national nurse had been up all night and Mrs. Missionary must be early at the hospital to take charge in the wards. In the early glow of the new day she approaches the hospital. A shrill childish voice calls, " She comes! " Thereupon flying heels and flapping skirts, as five little convalescing patients flee from the veranda to their beds! And five little forms are stretched on their beds in the most perfect hospital decorum when she enters. " She comes! " seems to have echoed and re-echoed all over the hospital. Jackets are hastily donned and buttoned by the men patients, for life is always informal in this small hospital. The rules are interesting to contemplate, but why jackets for a man? His tattoo is gay and inexpensive and cool.

Mrs. Missionary surveys the wards with a critical eye. The atmosphere is comparatively buoyant and free from frowns,

and the orderlies have left the wards surprisingly neat and ready for visitors. A little voice pipes out, " And when are we going to eat? " This sends Mrs. Missionary to the small diet kitchen, where the food has been sent over to the hospital from her house, all ready to serve.

Scarcely are baths over and beds made than visitors begin to arrive. During the morning several hundred visitors arrive and the quiet little hospital becomes a veritable riot. No doors are closed except the one into the maternity ward, and over this hangs the sign, " Fiercely forbidden to enter! "

Dr. Missionary arrives late this morning, and a number of clinical patients are waiting to be examined. Before he takes them to the clinical room, he visits the wards. The news goes round, " He comes! " As he goes the rounds he is greeted with smiles. Some of the patients take his right hand and tap it on their foreheads to show that it was this hand that made them well. One little lad slyly protrudes a tiny foot, with the hope that the doctor will tickle it — meantime watching out of the side of his eye for Mrs. Missionary, who will be sure to say, " Little Golden House, what are you doing with your foot sticking out like that? " Dr. Missionary's almost six feet of height is rather a fearful sight to the patients, especially to those who have never before seen a foreigner. One tiny shrimp of an old man was quite overcome, and gave his opinion, when asked, that the doctor was " too big."

At eleven o'clock part of the staff go to the operating room and two patients are operated on. While the operations are going on, Mrs. Missionary makes up the temperature charts and notes for the records. Patients are wheeled from the operating room and she puts them to bed. Then lunch must be served. The patients discuss their food endlessly — the merits of peppers, which they are not allowed to eat, and the delicious fragrance of pickled fish, another loved delicacy, also forbidden.

At two o'clock, " She comes again! " Hospital work is an

everlasting and never-ending repeating and re-repeating of tasks. For a patient to pull his bedclothes askew seems to enchant him and gives his life point; it accents his objection to being too tidy. Perhaps no one should begrudge him his little joke! The surgical patients need comforting because the usual rice and curry is denied them, and liquid diet they abhor. Joy reigns supreme when the midafternoon lunch appears — there is something mysteriously comforting about a cup of hot milk!

With everyone in good humor, Mrs. Missionary sits down at her desk, in easy hearing distance of the wards, and writes her records. There are some tragic stories and some marvelous recoveries. Here is a farmer who began to have a peculiar swelling under his arm. Instead of coming to the hospital, he tried to propitiate the spirits. Alas! the tumor continued to grow, so it was death or the hospital. He decided to try the hospital. He seemed utterly hopeless. Yet today Mrs. Missionary is closing his record with that magic word, " Recovery." There is also the little baby who arrived in convulsions. Down on his record goes the magic word too. There are many cases of anemia, especially among the women. All these women are typical of the Lao woman found any place in the north of Thailand — even in the hospital they show that they have been to a charm school, and their art is never separated from them even in sickness. The nurses have gone to endless trouble to make bed jackets in which they will look lovely, and the amenities and graces of life, so dear to the Lao woman, are not forgotten even in pain. It is a sort of essence distilled through centuries of gracious living.

At four thirty Dr. Missionary has finished his clinical and laboratory work and " Madam Guildie " (the motor car given by the Florence B. Crooks Guild of the First Church of Kansas City) comes to take him on his round of calls in the homes of the sick.

At five o'clock Mrs. Missionary makes the rounds of all the patients to tell them good-by until the next morning. As she

leaves, she hears a patient remark, "She never gets tired of us!" Whereupon Mrs. Missionary fears that she has been parading some virtues which she knows she does not possess. In another ward a patient frowns at her topee hat and remarks: "I don't like your hat! It means you are going to leave us."

From the hospital she goes to the weekly prayer meeting for the older women of the city church. This is held in the homes of the women. As she enters the yard, the group on the veranda which appeared very serious begins to smile. The leader has not come — an almost unheard of calamity where it is considered a great honor to be asked to lead. But now Mrs. Missionary can lead. She protests, but the duty is inescapable as hunger, sleep, or death. There is one woman in this group who has a marvelous power in prayer, and she prays.

When Mrs. Missionary returns home she finds callers on her front veranda. Some are real visitors and some only pretended ones. The latter have fruit and vegetables to sell and hope to receive much more than their worth for them. It's a game of matching wits, where the skill is mostly on one side.

After supper the choir from the city church comes to practice. As the singers start home Mrs. Missionary goes into the garden with them. The moon is just appearing, silent, placid, and glowing. A magnificent palm is silhouetted against its glorious beauty. In all the brilliant splendor the altos and sopranos stand in a little group, their faces aglow with the joy of the music and the moonlight. "It's a beautiful world, isn't it?" comments Mrs. Missionary as she goes in after bidding them all good night.

IX

Adventures in Health

In our hospital here in Nan, we are constantly meeting with the most appalling cases of acute anemia, general weakness, and undernourishment. How some of these people manage to arrive without dying on the way is a mystery that cannot be solved from a physical standpoint. The more we see of them, the more we marvel that human beings have such contemptuous disdain and such systematic disregard for health. Is it because, never having had healthy bodies, they do not feel the loss of this rightful inheritance of every man, woman, and child? Perhaps!

Most of our patients are farmers. Picture the Thai farmer, first and last and always, in his poverty — but not always poverty that must be necessarily. The land is well equipped to furnish the essentials of a living. However, the essentials of a proper diet are still more or less of a closed secret. There is even greater vagueness on what constitutes a balanced diet.

Thumbs down on the Americans, long credited with being the fastest eaters of the world! Speedy consumption of food is a national bad habit, at least here in the north. The people are leisurely in all things except in this very important function. "And why eat if one is not hungry and why spend money for special food for one who does not desire it?" is the philosophy that has brought many of our patients to their really dangerous condition. And this is paid for by the people in loss of health, suffering, and death. It is a tragedy to see death that might have been avoided.

To give our patients a chance to be normal human beings we have to watch all the approaches, and a good diet is not yet the complete answer. A good diet would be useless to weary

men and women, leaden-footed, dragging weary bodies along, because of the most murderous creatures that live as parasites of man. These parasites, of which the hookworm is the arch-offender, take more lives than many of the dreaded diseases, because they break down the body's protective forces and sap the strength, and the host readily falls a victim to germs of all kinds. No diet can solve the problem while these are present. However, there are simple remedies for these conditions that threaten the health of these people — a treatment to relieve the infection, a proper diet, and a leisurely consuming of the same. Once they have this knowledge they have the magic key which will unlock tomorrow's treasures of good health.

To be sure, the benefits of a proper diet are not always wholly convincing at first, but as people see the evidence, they become more so. Some of the patients were highly vocal about the cost at first, and for people under the compelling necessity of never spending a satang (the smallest copper piece) where it could be saved, two of these for an egg seemed a luxury that should not be indulged in. But plain egg is no longer plain egg, but part of the magic key to health, and well worth making an effort to procure. And now let us open the hospital's family album and look at a few pictures.

Here is Miss Nada, who walked a mile to the hospital — not a long distance for these people, but in her case it was a walk with death — perhaps we would better say a slow race with death. As I was sitting at my desk on the veranda, I saw her coming slowly up the steps. Her eyes were fixed and staring as she walked to a bench and slumped down. Spirit had conquered. She was determined to come. She had arrived and her part was over. Without asking any questions, we put her to bed and for twenty-four hours we fought death while she had only a muddled impression of the battle going on around her. She was so acutely anemic that her blood that was drawn for testing was almost white. She had had malaria for almost

a month and during that time very little food had been taken. In this case there was food of a kind, but she did not want to eat. We have here one of our classical pictures — the protective forces of the body sapped by parasites and thus a ground well prepared for malaria; lack of medication; lack of proper diet. The usual results are that, as the people say, " nothing is left of them but their names." They call it " fate," but we call it " useless tragedy " as we think of the agony of suffering which was the unhappy lot of these young lives unnecessarily cut off.

Now we shall turn the page of our album and see Miss Nada again. She trips lightly and gracefully up the steps. Her cheeks are pink and lovely and she is glowing with health. She knows the sheer beauty and miracle of being alive. And is she grateful? She opens her basket and begins to put on the desk her little thank offering — some fresh eggs, oranges, and so on. Then she adds a few tears as she exclaims, " And I would have died if it had not been for the hospital and the Lord who healed me! "

Here is a new picture. One day as I was in the diet kitchen preparing a very troublesome tray for an equally troublesome patient, an old grandmother appeared to tell me that she had something interesting for me to see on the front veranda. " Thanks! " I said. " But I am not buying anything today."

" And have I anything to sell? " she replied, beaming in rare good humor. Must be a joker someplace, I thought, as I watched my vexatious patient slowly tuck away the contents of his unwelcome tray!

Later I found the old grandmother on the veranda, and with her a very beautiful young mother holding a lovely baby. As we continued to gaze at each other, the young mother said, " It is very evident that you do not remember us," indicating herself and the baby.

" And have I ever had the pleasure of your acquaintance be-

fore? " I asked. Then a picture came to me — a little wizened infant, dried up like a mummy. She was six months old and hardly the size of a month-old baby. I had argued endlessly that nothing but a period of hospitalization would restore the child, only to capitulate in the end by demonstrating the proper diet, with no hope whatever that my suggestions would be followed: so many spoons of condensed milk, so many spoons of cod-liver oil, purée of vegetables, orange juice, and so on, then back over it again, almost in tears because death looked at me from that pitiful little face.

And now, months later, here is the picture of this child, apparently in excellent health. The mother had followed the directions after all. There was not one feature to be recognized in the child except her bright little eyes. Before leaving, the mother said proudly, " I am now helping the mothers in our village to feed their children properly, and you should see how they are improving." I thought, How marvelous is a little knowledge! And this was done in spite of the fact that we sternly forbid the patients to hand their diet lists to others.

Now here is a picture of a lovely little lady, who was invariably accustomed to having her own way because she could so cleverly reduce people to smiles or tears by her seductive wiles. Her name was Boon Pan (A Bundle of Merit). When we see her picture as she arrived in the hospital she resembled nothing so much as a tiny puffball. Her eyes were two tiny slits, and her nose stood out from her face like a little hillock. " You can never save her," was the verdict of a visiting nurse who saw her. Her restricted diet, her only hope for recovery, she did not accept with blind obedience. On the contrary, she spent hours intriguing how she could get forbidden food and still appear to be obeying. After a gallant fight on the part of the nursing staff, the little puffball melted into quite a pretty young lady. It seemed incredible that she was the mother of a child as she was so tiny and girlish.

Now this was not yet recovery, because her heart, so desperately weak from the first, still gave doubts to the gallant fight for her life. All along the line, like the mournful chorus in a Greek tragedy, this weak little heart told the story of her fall from her restricted diet. "And what did you eat yesterday to make this pulse?" the nurse, on the verge of tears, would ask. "Nothing, truly nothing." Nothing would boil down to something quite tangible that she had wheedled from a fellow patient. Finally she discovered that, no matter how skillfully she herself could prevaricate, and almost persuade the nurse even when she knew it could not be true, there was a little organ inside of her that always invariably and most embarrassingly told the truth. Then finally she realized that under right conditions her poor weak little heart could repair itself with very remarkable efficiency. Then and only then was the battle won.

Now we turn the page to a new picture, and lovely Boon Pan is restored to health, very happy and very grateful. She is another triumph for diet and proper care.

And now we must close the album on the hundreds of other pictures.

The merchants in the Nan market tell us that they sell more milk since we came and established the hospital. The sales have more than doubled. The butcher says that at times he can hardly meet the demands for liver. Oatmeal and prunes have appeared in the stores because of our special diets.

So now it seems that spreading the good tidings of diet is not too naïve or fantastic for these people to consider. Our diets and treatments, like news here, travel via the grapevine telephone, and it is an effective propaganda if not quite orthodox.

We are vastly encouraged by the interest these people take in a proper diet and the hope of good health ahead. Some of them, having faced death, now know the sheer beauty and the

miracle of being alive, and they live far more rationally and with more peace. All this may seem trivial with what still remains to be accomplished. However, we prefer to be encouraged by what has been accomplished rather than discouraged by what remains to be done. In this way we strive to bring to pass our three aims in the hospital: "For every patient a comfortable body, a contented mind, and, above all, a saved soul."

X

Patience Does It

It is a great experience to change from one province to another in Thailand. One might think that the work would be much the same and that the people might be much alike. There are, of course, national characteristics which quite generally go through the race, but there are also great differences, really very marvelous, in some ways. A change from one station to another is a change indeed, and we have also found it a great change from one hospital to another.

When we went to Lampang some thirty years ago it was only a large country village. It grew to be a city in the twenty-seven years we were there. But while other cities of Thailand were growing and prospering, the ancient old city of Nan was still in the midst of its calm serene country life much as it had been for centuries. There were some changes perhaps, but not any that really altered the character or the atmosphere of the place.

As for the hospital, while the work was not entirely new, still there had been no continuity from one regime to another and much of the influence of the past had been lost. It was

much the same as we found in Lampang thirty years ago. So we were really beginning anew, and that in a province where the financial condition is at its very lowest ebb. While at first the task seemed so hopeless, yet a very encouraging number of patients have been in our hospital, more than we could accommodate comfortably at times, so now we are having an addition built for our occasional overflow. These patients have come from the city and the villages, from distant provinces, and even from French territory. All these patients we have tried to give some conception of Jesus as their Saviour. Some few of them have become Christians; some wandering Christians have been brought back to the Lord; many Christians in good standing have been spared to the work because of the care in the hospital.

If all these could pass before our eyes in a procession, it would be interesting to know their life stories as we have listened to them. We shall now see two pictures typical of those who come to us.

It takes all kinds of people to make a hospital clinic, and all kinds of people are present in ours. There was Nai Prome, a farmer who wanted an easier way to prosperity and ease, so he decided to become a mahout. Now he is a farmer again, after an experience with an elephant and a sojourn in our hospital as a very unhappy consequence of this.

One day they came carrying Nai Prome up the steps of the veranda as a result of his get-rich-quick scheme. It had been two days since he had been injured. The men who carried him in explained that they had had to wait until he had breath enough to stand the journey. They did not explain why they did not remove the soil that he had acquired in his encounter with the elephant. To express it in the elegant parlance of the street, "he was a sight." He was indeed gravely injured, especially in the vital organs of his chest, and doubtless they were afraid to move him. It was a great change indeed from the rude litter of bamboo and mats to a hospital bed. But we did not

put him to bed until we had removed all the soil possible at the first bath.

For some days following, Nai Prome had only a muddled impression of all that went on about him as we carried on the battle to save his life. It was indeed a life-and-death struggle, but finally he began to show signs of recovery. When he became conscious, he was very much amazed at all he saw around him. However, he saw very dimly at first and thought all his fellow patients had died. In all his earthly experience previously, only the dead had been robed in all-white garments. This was, of course, somewhat of a shock, but he soon became conscious of his mistake. Then there were the two foreigners, and he had never had any previous contact with them, but as he said later, " They too were just folks," and he began to be quite happy again.

At first Nai Prome did not want to tell us anything about his experience with the elephant, but later on, when we all got acquainted, he became quite talkative and this is the story he told us:

Early one morning in the dim morning light he went to the lot where the elephant was tethered. He did not speak to her, and in the dim light she did not recognize him as her keeper. She became much excited and knocked him down with her trunk and struck him at least twice. It was unfortunate that she knocked the breath out of him so that he could not speak to her; otherwise what followed next would not have happened. She then picked him up in her trunk and, drawing him under her mouth, bit him first on his arm and then on his lower limb. It was at this point that his breath returned and he cried: " Stop! Stop! " In her fright at hearing the voice of her own keeper she threw him from her, and Nai Prome had strength enough to roll under the fence and escape any further injury.

Nai Prome did not know anything about our religion. He had heard the name of Jesus, but did not know what it meant.

But after his hospitalization that name meant everything to him: his care and comfort in the hospital — yes, as he put it, his very life, for he was as one back from the dead. He could not read, but he could listen, and this he did with gladness. It was a joy to see him as he attended carefully to what was being said and turned over the stories in his simple mind. It was with this wise simplicity that he received the blessed Gospel story and, like the blind man healed, he told one story when he went home: " This much I know, whereas I was in the shadow of death, Jesus healed me." All the men of the village could not shake this testimony. Now we have a faithful witness in his village, and no one leaves his house without hearing his testimony for the Lord and for the care he received in the hospital. We thank God for such a witness.

One day one of the outvillage Christians came to my desk and, lowering his voice to a sardonic whisper, said, " Do you know who that old man is in there on the bed? " He looked at me piercingly as I answered, " He is a surgical patient who has had a very serious operation." He waved my remark aside as quite irrelevant and said, " Well, it is very evident that you do not know who he is! " Then he proceeded to tell me a story that had been a tragedy in the Christian community where he lived, and how this man, whose name is Lung Pan, had been the most subtle and clever enemy against the Christian religion that they had known. How clear the picture was! This old man was the wealthy one of the district, and how these people do adore at the shrine of riches — alas! our Christians as well as others! But why had Lung Pan been such an enemy of Christianity? Nothing but satanic power can explain this.

How he watched the poor and faltering Christians, and just at the psychological moment he would extend and proffer his aid! For people who live for today and never feel any necessity of worrying over tomorrow, this was no warning as to where the path was leading. Little by little he wound his satanic tentacles around them, and gradually, so gradually,

pulled them from the fold back into the wiles of spirit worship. This was the story the outvillage Christian told with tears in his eyes and righteous indignation in his voice.

" Have you been teaching him anything about the religion? " he asked me, fixing me sternly with his sad old eyes. " Yes, we have been teaching him, but we will now renew our efforts," I replied. With this knowledge in hand, we fairly camped by his bedside, and not once did he betray a guilty conscience. When we pressed home on him that his very recovery was a proof of God's power, and that his healed body would now be a living witness of God's power, there was some response. This remark was rewarded by a startled look and then a sweet smile replaced it as he said, " Yes, truly, just so." He knew that there was nothing but death for him if he had not come for this operation. Doubtless there had been quite a struggle in his own heart and mind before he was willing to come to the Christians' hospital for his treatment. We may be sure that it was his last resort. The operation had been a most difficult one, but the results were splendid, beyond all hopes, considering his age and his very serious condition. The Lord had truly blessed him as all could testify and all did testify.

Lung Pan came to our chapel service, where he listened with good attention and a very respectful attitude. He was always pleasant and affable, but he never said what we were all hoping and praying for. Then the day of his departure came. He thanked us for all that we had done for him, which we insisted was nothing, as his healing was from the Lord. As to that he did not argue. He bowed himself down the steps of the veranda and was gone from us. However, if he thought that he was through with us he was mistaken. We could still follow him with our prayers. We prayed, above all, that he would come to know the Lord, and that if this was not to be, he would at least keep his wicked hands from drawing our weak lambs from the fold. That part we felt we must have as a reward — the least of our rewards of service.

Later on the evangelists went to his home. He received them kindly, and after much conversation in circles the main question of the visit was put forth, veiled in many rhetorical phrases. After the evangelists had spoken, Lung Pan began to spin around in conversational circles and, also veiled in many rhetorical phrases, the answer came, "Lung Pan will never again trouble the children of the Lord Jesus."

When the evangelists came back to the city and told us this story, we rejoiced greatly, but, of course, our joy was not complete. When I asked them if they felt that Lung Pan was near the Kingdom, they said that we must continue to pray for him, for who could tell what was behind the inscrutable mask that this clever old man wore.

We end the story here, but we are convinced that this is not yet the end. We are still praying that Lung Pan will keep the promise he made, and not only that, but also that he may become one with whose whom he has so bitterly persecuted in the past.

Many other little tragic stories are clamoring to be told but space does not allow. As we view the four years now past in this hospital, and remember how really dark the outlook was, we think, If the Lord had not been on our side, we should certainly have come to a crash along with the hospital long ago. The task seemed so impossible, but how marvelously the Lord smooths out these steep paths, once we begin to walk up in faith, and, while there are many thorns along the way, there are roses too.

Part Four

In Season and Out of Season

The Thai were without God and without hope when the missionaries came to them. Buddhism, aside from a promise which was not well understood, recognizes no God. Yet the Thai had man's heaven-born instinct of God and hearts hungry for the truth. What but failure could come to them as sinful men with a religion without God and a moral law without sanctions! Buddhism, to borrow one of its own expressions, is a " basket " of negations and contradictions. It frankly admits that it knows nothing of origins. It could not wipe out animism. From such darkness and despair hundreds have turned to certitude and rectitude, to the Light of life, and cried, " What must I do to be saved? " When by the power of the Spirit their lives were transformed they testified everywhere, " in season, out of season," " Jesus truly is a God worthy to be adored."

The work for the Thai has as yet only a bare beginning, and that only in twelve Stations, all but one within Thailand itself. What of the other millions? The hearts of the Thai people, no matter where found, are open. There are truly evident providential preparations to make ready these hearts, such as the pristine simplicity of the race, no special hindrances, the specific prophetic pointing definitely to Christ, and the strong expellant force from animism. It requires no prophet's eye to see the hand of God in all this and no prophetic ear to hear His call to the evangelism of this great Thai race. The outlook is as bright as the promises of our Lord and Master, who said, " Go ye."

I

Tour of a Novice in Prae Field

Dr. and Mrs. Missionary made a tour to some outvillages which were new to Christian work, and as we are new to the work we saw a great many interesting things which I suppose would have been unnoticed by older missionaries.

It was two o'clock exactly, my chair was at last loaded, and we were ready to start. Does it sound as if that was all I had to do — to walk down, get into my chair, and ride joyfully away? That was always the picture I had in mind when I read of missionaries' touring. But I found it a great mistake.

For some time we had been getting ready for this trip. As we can never tell just what will happen in our absence, whether the white ants will come in and devour our possessions or the rats do likewise, everything suited to their taste must be put away in a safe place. The black ants are also a plague and anything in the way of sugar or preserved fruits, unless well sealed, must be packed away in a safe, wired and in water. The cockroach is also a great enemy; anything of which he is especially fond will be destroyed unless cared for. When all this is done, one's mind is free to decide on what provisions to take for the trip. We take just as little as we can get along with, because all must be carried by men. Our touring dishes must be selected with care, as we never know how many will reach home in good condition.

But we were ready at last! and from our compound we passed into the busy city through the market, where people stopped their buying to ask me, "Where are you going?" for that is really a very polite way to salute one. As my vocabulary is yet limited, I answered that I was going on a visit.

From the noisy city we went out upon the quiet country road,

where in the distance are the mountains, beautiful in their purple colorings. On and on we went to the rhythmical pat of the carriers' feet, until the next little village was reached, where all was life and animation. Here we rested, and the men refreshed themselves by a drink from the town pump, which in the Lao country is a bamboo pole with a bamboo bucket.

At last we arrived at a village where one of the Christians was waiting to conduct us. He explained to the people around that I was a disciple of the Lord, the same as himself, and as we continued our journey he answered the repeated inquiry of, "Where are you going?" by, "We are going to do the Lord's work." The camp was soon reached, for our guide, although an old man, is no laggard, and the tent was pitched in the yard of a Christian family lately received into the Church. They hurried out to meet us and gave us a hearty welcome. Mats were brought for our floor, and the best they had was at our disposal. Our host was one of the headmen of the village.

As very few of the people had ever heard an organ, I had hardly taken my hat off before they begged me to play. The children were wild with delight, and showed their appreciation by jumping up and down. By the time I had played one hymn, a hundred people had collected and Dr. Missionary told them that I would play one more and then they must go home, get their suppers, and return for the evening service. The large crowd that came in the evening was very pronounced in appreciation of the music. As our carriers are Christians, the singing is always good. After a Bible lesson, prayers, and more singing, the meeting closed, but not one in our audience left. Our hostess said, "The people wait that they may hear you play again." "But," I said, "I will not play again until morning." Then our host came saying, "A man here wants to know if you will treat eyes." After Dr. Missionary had spent some time explaining that he could not examine eyes by lamplight, the man said, "My eyes are all right; my brother in the next village is the one whose eyes need treating." At that we all had a good

laugh and felt better acquainted. Many questions followed: our ages; how long had we been Christians; all about our parents. To be very polite, in this country one must ask a mother how many children she has. She will then call them from the crowd and proudly exhibit them, announcing their peculiar names. One little girl here has a name meaning " a plant growing by running water and always green."

Next morning it was hardly light before the women began coming. Each little woman, with a baby balanced on her hip and a cigar in her mouth, came hurrying to our tent. After breakfast the curtains were raised and a shout arose that might be translated: " Come to see the doctor's wife. She is writing something in a book." As they were in my tent looking around, I jotted down a few remarks that I could understand: " Is this soap? What does she do with it? " " Washes her face with it." " Every time? " All look at me critically to see the effect of such a process. Next my hairbrush: " What is this? Can it be a comb? " " I will try it," says another, running it through her hair. " Yes, it is a comb." Everything in the tent having been well looked over, I came in for my share, until one suddenly exclaimed: " We haven't given Maa Lieng any betel." Whereupon, overcome at having forgotten their manners, several hastened off for their betel boxes, but I called them back and explained that betel chewing is not our custom.

In the midst of all this excitement, one little fellow took the occasion to crawl under the table and pinch my foot, to see if it was really inside my shoe as one woman had thought probable. It was an unlucky act on his part; he was promptly pulled out and sent home disgraced.

After this, interest centered around the organ, and I began teaching the children to sing. Soon we had the first stanza of " Jesus Loves Me " so well that several women were inspired to try to learn it too. This was a good beginning and every day, during the week we were there, Dr. Missionary and I held two classes. The evening service was led by a Lao evangelist, and at

each meeting over a hundred people heard the wonderful news of salvation carefully explained. The order at such services is far from good; someone will forget himself and talk. The rest of the audience will tell him that he ought to know better, he ought to be put out, and so on. Yet we know that many in that village were helped to see the better side of life and that several are earnestly studying. One dear woman, over sixty years, said she wanted to be a Christian but did not understand. Often people stayed after service and the Christians read the Bible and sang hymns with them.

The next village was one where no work has been done in the past. Most of the women and children had never seen a white woman before, and they looked and kept on looking at me as though they might never again have an opportunity. After their curiosity was somewhat overcome we tried a singing class, but without Christians to help it was not a success. Audiences were large and many people came for long talks with the evangelists, and we are hoping for results from this village where before all was darkness.

The Lao people are very pleasant to be with. They are fond of foreigners, and in this village almost everyone developed some ailment in order to get a little medicine, so anxious were they to see how it tasted. At last the days became so warm that we were forced to return to Prae. A house is a luxury after a tent, but the thought that one may have brought gladness into some dark life pays for any hardship.

II

Mrs. Missionary Spends a Day in the Country

For thirteen consecutive years an annual message has come to *Woman's Work* from Mrs. Crooks. In the midst of activities in teaching, preaching, and helping Dr. Crooks in his medical work, she never

forgets to send us some sprightly sketch of life and work in Thailand. These animated stories are often quoted in other missionary magazines. We are more than ever grateful to Mrs. Crooks for her loyalty this year when, as she says, she has "not seen a copy of *Woman's Work* for months"; though, of course, these have been sent to her regularly. — *Editor of* Woman's Work.

It is early morning; the eye of day has just begun to shine through the mists. Mrs. Missionary is up and the household is busy getting her off for a day's visit in the country. The cook has trotted in breathless from the early market, and, with a stir here and a punch there, presto! breakfast is ready and the luncheon packed up. The gramophone, books for distribution, and the luncheon are put in two carrying baskets swung on the end of a long bamboo pole. A soft, apologetic cough from the veranda announces the arrival of the carrier, so all is well in that direction. Mrs. Missionary now solemnly admonishes each one as to his tasks during the day, especially the cook in regard to the food for the hospital patients, while that continually hurried gentleman with equal solemnity re-echoes each order to the other celestials.

At the foot of the veranda stands a long-suffering, fat, patient creature — Mrs. Missionary's pony. Now the procession is ready to form. First goes the elder, because it is always a becoming thing to have a man lead a procession, and also because the pony refuses to go first, but will willingly follow the peculiar brand of hat which the elder wears. Following the pony comes the lady attendant required by etiquette, and last comes the carrier. As they hurry on through the market, people call from all sides asking where they are going — not that they really care to know, but one must always be polite and say something in this Oriental land.

Soon the city is left behind and the little procession is out on the country road. Market women are swinging along gracefully with their baskets, hurrying to the early market. A pleasant word of greeting is exchanged as they pass and, as some of

them are former patients in the hospital or have been to the hospital with friends or relatives, there must be short stops with little visits. The object of the day's trip is a village eight miles away in the jungle, to see a former patient. It is Dr. Missionary's plan that all patients from the hospital should be followed up; hence we go as his representatives.

From the main road one drops into the beautiful jungle, shady and comparatively cool. The path is narrow, trees overgrow it, and the " wait-a-bit thorns " reach out and hinder progress. On the way Mrs. Missionary stops in a tiny little village to hold a prayer meeting with a former hospital patient who was once apparently cured of her disease, but it has returned. She is so patient and has such faith that God will, in his own time and way, cure her! After a short meeting the procession again moves on.

At last the village is reached. The barking of the dogs and the shouting of the children announce the arrival, the host and hostess come running to receive their guests, and in almost no time, Mrs. Missionary is up in the house in the seat of honor and all the family silver is being produced to welcome her. The house is already filled with people, but lest anyone should not have come the host beats his drum, for he is the headman of the village and everyone must come when the drum sounds. There does not seem to be any room for others, but others come, including ten Buddhist priests and the head priest.

Now one of Buddha's precepts is that no priest shall look at a woman. It seems that the priests have forgotten that precept in the excitement of the day. They insist on the congregation's making way for them to sit near Mrs. Missionary. It is a rare opportunity for Mrs. Missionary to teach these young, intelligent priests; they listen and question about the Jesus religion, of which they evidently know something. The host has been teaching his neighbors some of the principles of our religion. Considering the short time he was in the hospital, his understanding is very good indeed. While he was in the hos-

pital Dr. and Mrs. Missionary tried to convince him that Jesus was the Promised One in Buddhism, but he has not yet said that he believes this to be true.

At one o'clock the elder suggests that Mrs. Missionary may be hungry and would better eat her lunch — a thought no doubt born of his own feelings. But the head priest says that it is too early to eat yet, and that he will now read a bit from one of the Jesus books. This he proceeds to do, with no pause at the end of any sentence, stopping only when he is compelled to breathe. This is the custom in the temple. The people listen very carefully, and at two o'clock the priest says that it is enough, *hu?* — an expression which means an interrogative "perhaps." Mrs. Missionary says she feels quite sure it is enough, and does not inquire of the priest whether it is a propitious time to eat, but at once produces her luncheon and gives a demonstration before a hundred pairs of attentive eyes of how foreign people eat. It proves most interesting!

The day is melting hot and the sun beats down on the thatch roof; the air fairly sizzles! Occasionally someone remarks that it is warm, but most of the people are too interested to mind the heat. The elder preaches and pleads most eloquently, and our host finally says that after study in the Buddhist books, since his return from the hospital, he is persuaded that Jesus is the Promised One.

It has been a grand day, and when the eye of day begins to fall in the west, Mrs. Missionary says that she must be starting for home. A hundred voices protest that it cannot be late and she need not go yet. They even beg her to stay all night, saying that there are plenty of mattresses and pillows. Sure enough, there are five large mattresses and a pile of pillows in the corner — but one fleeting glance in that direction and Mrs. Missionary is quite determined to go!

The long-suffering, patient creature is saddled, the procession forms again, and the host and hostess escort the guests out of the village. Mrs. Missionary begs to take leave of them and

they invite her to go, all of which is much more polite than it sounds. The elder is pleased over the day and the good opportunity of preaching, but, with the reserve of his race, he remarks casually, as the patient creature patters along at his heels, "It was a somewhat pleasant day, wasn't it?" *"Somewhat!"* cries Mrs. Missionary. "How can you talk like that? It was *splendid!*"

And this is the splendid work which our doctors are doing all over Thailand. By their incessant toil they are driving powerful wedges to open men's minds for the greater work — the winning of souls.

III

Mrs. Missionary Holds an Examination

Mrs. Missionary has hurried through her classes for the hospital staff. Everything has to be out of the way before four o'clock, when the two Bible women are bringing their classes for the term's examination. These Bible women plod along, going from home to home teaching the women faithfully day by day, but when the term's examination comes there is some excitement! The women are in terror for fear they will forget, and the teachers are excited for fear their fears will be realized, so between them they work up quite an atmosphere. This atmosphere is the mustard in the salad dressing, and adds a delightful tang to the close of the term's work. Mrs. Missionary would prefer a calmer atmosphere, but she never meddles with local traditions.

Mrs. Missionary slips into her prettiest gown and gives her hair a final pat as a low murmur of voices announces that the first women have come. They stop to wash their feet at the bottom of the steps; there is a soft patter across the veranda, a

series of polite coughs, and they present themselves in the drawing room. They greet Mrs. Missionary — calm, dignified, impenetrable Oriental women. Their demeanor shows them not only to be women of real refinement but also to possess an indescribable charm that seems a part of themselves. After greetings are over, the women seat themselves on the rug, their feet under them, with the soles carefully put out of sight according to their rigid rules of etiquette. The Lao women think a chair to sit on is "a vain thing for safety"!

Several more groups come in — no Lao woman ever goes anywhere alone if she can possibly avoid it. Next a Bible woman comes; she glances keenly around the room to see if all her group are there. For sometimes the women, like the young brother in the Bible, say, "I go, sir," and then go not. This Bible woman is Kru Kow, a woman of peculiar charm of manner and intense earnestness, with a beautiful face that no one but a Christian could have, reminding one of those delicate, fragrant orchids which bloom in the quiet of the jungle. Added to her natural charm, the training in our Christian school has made her a truly fascinating personality.

More groups arrive and after them the second Bible woman, Kru Boon Mee. She is of a dominating personality. If we had all been blindfolded, we should still have felt that personality in the door. Christianity has meant everything to her. She has borne the stinging marks of her love for her Lord in broken, quivering flesh. "I will beat you until you die," her non-Christian brother said, as he laid open her wounds with bitter, cruel strokes. "I am not afraid to die," was her answer, "for I have met my Saviour." She has not the finished qualities of one who grows up in the Christian school, but she has that peculiar strength which comes from persecution. Her keen eye, too, goes quickly over the room to see if her women are all there.

Just a suggestion of a smile flits around the room, for in the door stands Lao Sang — a Chinese from Hainan, a former pa-

tient in the hospital, a convert, who now studies with Kru Kow. If the rest consider him a bit of a joke it is quite evident even to the most casual observer that this is not at all his view of himself. He comes in, sits down with calm dignity, opens his books, and begins to study. He is not going to miss any of his questions. He looks as if he were about to be guillotined, but will die struggling! That it is possible for a man to study with a woman is something we have learned here only in the last five years. Ai Seing, a former patient in the hospital, now on the medical staff, demonstrated before many startled eyes that such a thing was possible when he begged the Bible woman to teach him to read. Ai Seing preached in the city church last Sunday.

After three other men arrive, also from the hospital and pupils of Kru Kow, there are thirty-six present, and that is about as many as can be hoped for in one meeting. Mrs. Missionary opens the baby organ, that melodious and helpful accompaniment of every service, and announces that they will sing number eight. Those who can find their places in the book do so and those who cannot do so hand their books to the Bible woman. About the last thing a woman learns in this country seems to be to find the place in the hymnbook. As an old Bible woman once remarked of one of her pupils, " Pe Kao can read and find her place in the hymnbook; she must give her place now to someone who cannot read." So she would grant a diploma on the ability to read and find the hymns!

When everyone has the place the singing begins. Grandmother Kao and Aunt Pawm sit next to Mrs. Missionary, one over seventy, the other past sixty; their voices rise sweet and clear and in perfect tune. Truly the Lao are wonderfully musical people. Grandmother Kao leads in a beautiful prayer; one of her petitions is that God will richly bless the two women in America who have made it possible for them to have the Bible women to teach them.

After this the examinations begin. Kru Kow, charming and

with perfect ease, takes charge and puts her class through the examination. She looks a little more earnest and a trifle more eager than usual, as if to say: "Now look sharp! Don't any of you forget. I will die of shame if you do!" The women are all tense; they do not want their beloved teacher to die of shame. Their voices are low and almost quivering at first, but as the examination proceeds and all goes well, their courage comes and voices grow stronger. They finally come to a triumphant close, having reviewed six chapters of the life of Christ.

Kru Kow sits down with a little soft sigh of satisfaction. Lao Sang is beaming in his corner, sitting with his legs crossed in front of him, for all the world like an idol but with this difference — he has some expression, which an idol never has. The women are all pleased too, but being calm, dignified Oriental ladies, they do not show it too plainly. Mrs. Missionary says to herself, "Now be careful; don't be too demonstrative!" This little formula Mrs. Missionary has been repeating to herself many times a day for the last sixteen years. It is almost like an eleventh commandment, so now she says, "I am quite pleased at the good examination that you have gone through, both teacher and pupils." Pleased indeed! She was just delighted!

Then Kru Boon Mee takes the floor. Instantly her class stiffens for action. Her voice fairly booms through the room. She is so intent on getting her class through that she evidently pitches her voice for the people in the next block! Each question sounds as if she were hurling a bomb at that particular woman, but each one deftly catches it up and quickly gives the answer. All goes well until, "Who was tetrarch of Galilee, and who were the high priests when John began to preach?" The meek little lady who catches this bomb looks aghast and rolls her eyes imploringly in Mrs. Missionary's direction. Mrs. Missionary trembles. It is easy enough to remember the tetrarch but the high priests! Mrs. Missionary is wondering if she can disappear behind the baby organ if her temporary lapse of

memory on this important question is exposed, when the meek little lady fetches them both down from her brain and saves the day. All goes well through the number of chapters which they have to review. "Not finished yet," says Kru Mee, after the last question, and Mrs. Missionary makes a move to commend them. What now, indeed? Kru Mee was always doing something unexpected. Mrs. Missionary had noticed, when the women were gathering, that one of the most talkative ones had been strangely quiet. "Are you ill?" she had inquired. "I am somewhat well," she replied, sadly. Now the reason for her silence is made known. In rapid succession the Bible woman puts her through chapter after chapter of the term's work, and she answers with incredible speed. She and Kru Mee resemble two animated machines spouting at each other. As she proceeds her sadness fades away like a cloud, she fairly beams, her cheeks are pink with excitement. The two performers forget the rest of the audience, but the audience is breathlessly interested. "That's all," says Kru Mee at the end. Mrs. Missionary forgets to remind herself of the usual formula and is very profuse in her praise. Even Grandmother Kao says it was wonderful.

The women had all done a good term's work, they were eager for the new chapters and they felt more loyal to their teachers who had led them through the term. None of these women would ever have learned to read if it had not been for the help of the Bible women because they became Christians when they were too old to enter school. The majority of them are comparatively new Christians.

It might seem like time to go home after all this, but there are no anxious glances cast in the direction of the door. The baby organ is again opened and Mrs. Missionary conducts a prayer meeting as if nothing has happened before it. Hymns are sung, earnest prayers are offered, Mrs. Missionary talks on that very interesting subject of the tongue according to the Apostle James. For there are times when dignified Oriental

ladies forget, and when they do, the result is quite appalling.

And thus in due time the meeting comes to an end — a profitable as well as an enjoyable affair. At the end the women ask to have a picture of their group taken, but some not present have sent word to beg to have it postponed, and so it was taken later.

In this meeting there have been two silent and amazed spectators. "We are ashamed to come; we are not beautiful like the Christian women," they said, when Mrs. Missionary went to the hospital to invite them. Truly, the Christian woman is a fair sight. Buddhism has nothing beautiful to give to anyone. A princess said recently, "These Christian women have a peculiar shining glory about them. If there were a hundred women in a room and one Christian among them, she would stand forth with this peculiar radiance, and we might adorn ourselves in all our gold and precious jewels but she would still outshine us all."

IV

One Happy Day

"What is so rare as a day in June?" asks the poet. At least one answer is: "A day which is cool and bright; a day free for work in the outvillages."

The morning was young as the elder, Mrs. Missionary, and Kru Chan set out in the motor car on a twelve-mile journey, the motor car going one mile, the other eleven being covered on man's most ancient mode of locomotion. The motor car was to "give face," which is more absorbing here than food and drink. "What, did you walk all the way?" they were often asked during the trip. And the Bible woman would answer, "No, we came in a motor car."

As the motor car stopped at the end of the road and the beginning of the path that wandered through rice fields and up hill and down dale, the trio fell into single file — the elder ahead because he was so fortunate as to be born a man, Mrs. Missionary next, and Kru Chan in the rear.

Presently in the distance a group of gaily dressed people were seen approaching. They were carrying their offerings to the temple in brass bowls, and they looked like an animated flower garden out for a stroll. After the polite exchange of greetings, such as: "Where are you going?" "Where did you come from?" "And is this the doctor's wife?" and having heard about the motor car, et cetera, the trio and the animated garden sat down on the ridges of the rice field to talk over the news of the Kingdom. The audience had the usual studied, calm, indifferent look of cool aloofness peculiar to the Lao people, but their manners as always were perfect. They were on their way to "make merit," but who can tell where the message will draw or where a heart will be touched by it? Nothing conquers like conquering.

The elder spoke first. He told how for years he was a Buddhist priest — did in truth hold the highest degree the temple had to give; but to sinful man in his own strength making merit was impossible. Never in all his merit-making had he known peace. Jesus only gave peace. Jesus was the Saviour to whom Buddha pointed them. After the trio had all spoken, books and tracts were given out, and visits were urged to the Christian homes that the inquirers might learn more of the religion. Then the flower garden and the trio proceeded on their separate ways.

Another mile or two brought the trio to a group of market women on the way home from early morning market. Under the cool shade of a wide-spreading tamarind tree they had just finished their breakfast. Now, not many years ago the Bible woman had been a market woman too, and these women at once called her by name. She recognized them as her special

audience and cleared the preliminaries in a hurry – where, why, and how they came, and all about the motor car, and so on. Then she told them simply and beautifully the Gospel story and the marvelous love of the Saviour, and gave her personal experience of that love. She enchanted and inspired them and took them up to view the gates of heaven. She already had the confidence and respect of these women from her market days, so there was nothing to mar her testimony. The wheels turn and a woman's past makes her present. Her face was that of one who had come over a long, thorny road and had at last won peace from suffering and sorrow. And now she poured out this love to others.

Several groups were met before the village which was the destination of the trio was reached. The dogs barked, announcing the arrival of the queer visitors. The children laughed or cried, according to their various emotions on seeing a foreigner, and the whole village left its work and came to listen to the Gospel. Mrs. Missionary was given the only chair in the village to sit on. Oh, those stonyhearted chairs! Alas for the discomfort of the exalted! When it came her turn to speak, Mrs. Missionary begged the hostess's pardon and said that, with her permission, she would come down from the throne. There were real believers in this village and as they listened joy lighted their faces as a room is lighted with an unseen lamp.

But Satan is ever present when the children of God come to present themselves to the Lord, and his ugly head was raised when the Bible woman was speaking. Instantly she stiffened for the attack. She was like a bombardment, sending false hopes of merit and spirit worship crashing in all directions. Her powers of description are considerable when aroused, and her logic is inherently sound and consistent. The audience was in open agreement with her.

In the next village the audience filled the large, roomy veranda in the home of the headman of the village. Here the wel-

come was warm, even tearful, because this man's life had very recently been spared through the surgical skill of Dr. Missionary. When the power of God was spoken of, it had a peculiar meaning for these people. It was a blessed privilege to present the Gospel here where no hearts were locked or barred against it.

After each of the trio had spoken, the audience recomposed itself, and around Mrs. Missionary and Kru Chan was a little circle of women with earnest, uplifted faces. They asked, "What shall we do to be saved?" Two women especially clung to the Bible woman. These two women and Kru Chan mutually realized a link of spirit — a real desire for better and purer things. "O Mrs. Missionary," they said, "you cannot realize what we suffer from these evil spirits!" Their sad, hopeless eyes told part of the tale. Labyrinthine and tortuous are ever the intrigues of the spirits; there is horror in these obscure and secret tragedies of which the foreigner can know nothing.

"I know," said Kru Chan, as she put a sympathetic hand on the speaker's arm, "I have been through it all, and have come to show you the way of escape." The women were past middle life and were not in the habit of looking upward, so it was obvious that all they saw was their little universe where fear of the spirits rules. Great visions give great peace, and these women finally caught the vision.

As the trio hurried from this village to start home through the rice fields, the sun proceeded to wave his red flag with fiery abandon with a heat that offered no prospect of even a breath of a breeze. Walking on the ridges of the rice field, watching one's step and holding an umbrella, is not too simple, and when the unexpected happens there is trouble. Suddenly two of the trio were amazed to hear Mrs. Missionary scream and see her dart off into the rice field. A king cobra had raised his head and struck at her from the edge of the ridge. He was enjoying the shade when the elder had aroused and angered him, and

when Mrs. Missionary, being second, arrived, he was ready. There were only clods of dirt for weapons but how the elder and Kru Chan fought that vicious reptile! Time and time again he sprang at them, and they jumped nimbly aside. It was a battle royal. Mrs. Missionary begged them to stop, and prayed that they would soon cross the line between the joy of conflict and the natural fear of this deadly snake, but with mutual encouragement they kept on. They were mad with the joy of the fight. At the most enchanting moment, when victory seemed near, Kru Chan was heard to exclaim in bitter disappointment, "There, now he has gone into his hole; nothing left but his tail!" They battered that until he drew it in too.

They were unable to proceed any farther for a little. Then hearts beat more gently, breathing became more normal, the trio continued across the rice fields and presented to the world a front of unbroken serenity. And why not? Who is not always in danger of death?

There was still another special village to make and they had been told that it was near three palm trees. And sure enough, soon after the snake incident, three magnificent palm trees were silhouetted against the afternoon sun. However, by some inexplicable contrariness, the elder refused to take the road that had been recommended, went off on a tangent, and the village was passed by. Later, by rare good fortune, the man they wanted especially to reach was found in the audience at another village, and peace was restored.

After they had taught in two more villages, evening was coming on. There was a lane of scarlet gold across the rice field. Conversation languished. It had been a glorious day, and it was not worth while to lament over tired feet as the trio hurried on to the city. They reached the walls of the town as the sun was sinking into the west gate of heaven. The gate closed and darkness swept down like a soft cloud; the lights of the city gleamed out. The long, happy day was over.

V

Mrs. Missionary at the City Market Chapel

It is Saturday, the day for holding service in the market chapel. Mrs. Missionary hurriedly counts out sixty cards, puts them into her bag, and rushes down to the riverbank, where the boat waits to take her across. As it comes into sight, she begins: "Are the books in? Is the evangelist here? Is the organ in? Are the girls all here? One, two, four, six! Yes, all here. Well, push off," and she springs into the boat from the slippery end of a teak log. The boatmen endeavor to do this also, but, alas! as usual, the boat is stuck. So out go all the occupants except Mrs Missionary and Baby Organ. Mrs. Missionary, by right of her shoes, is not expected to help, except by advice. At last the boat makes a plunge into the stream, the ten pushers hop in nimbly, and the river is soon crossed. As Mrs. Missionary proceeds through the market she might be taken, from the troop of children at her heels, for an understudy of the Pied Piper! This is the weekly event for the market children.

When Dr. and Mrs. Missionary began work in the market, to express it in the elegant parlance of the street, the disorder was "something fierce." Mrs. Missionary, an ex-schoolteacher, could just feel her nerves snap. The noise would have put to shame the confusion at the Tower of Babel. In the front of the room was a large table from which books were distributed. Under this table the small fry had a grand time, just out of reach of Dr. and Mrs. Missionary. Reserved seats under the table were always at a premium. One day Dr. Missionary too gave evidence of nerves. After the noise had reached such a pitch that nothing could be heard, he reached under the table and pulled forth what appeared to him to be the center of

confusion, two small lads, and deposited them at his feet. Mrs. Missionary looked for a great outcry. But they suddenly made a new discovery — Dr. Missionary's shoestrings — then they were quite happy.

At last Mrs. Missionary hit upon a plan which made under the table very unpopular. "Whoever sits under the table will get no card," she announced. After that it was shunned like a den of thieves. Other means were used too, and while the children are not so quiet as the historic mouse, still there was some improvement and room for more.

When Dr. Missionary arrives, the service is opened by singing, led by six girls who volunteer each week from the Sunday School to help in the street-market work. After two or three hymns a good crowd has collected, and the evangelist reads the lesson story for the day, explaining it by the picture roll, if we are so fortunate as to have one. The books from the table are offered to the people, who are urged to take them. While the books are being given out, more hymns are sung. Then Dr. Missionary applies the lesson to the people's needs, and he also urges them to receive the books. The crowd may have partly changed by this time, so more music is used to draw fresh hearers, while the story is again told by a third speaker. It would be difficult to find a more cosmopolitan audience — Thai, Burmese, Shans, Kamu, Chinese, Japanese, Hindus, et cetera. People from many nations and many tribes, from all over Lampang and other provinces, stop to look at the pictures and listen to the preaching. To many it is the first message from the Gospel that they have ever heard. They carry the printed page from this service into remote villages that the missionary may never even hope to see.

The most frequent messages given by the speakers are: "Christ has overcome sin. He has power over the evil spirits. Christ is the Saviour of the world. Come unto him. He will blot out your sins and save you from the spirits. The one to whom you pray in your temple, we proclaim him unto you.

You need not look for another to come. He who was to come is here already, even Jesus Christ, the Lord of all."

During this service Mrs. Missionary has been busy, playing the organ, keeping order, settling quarrels, trying to be impartial about who shall stand on her left and who on her right hand, and softly whispering, "Cards, cards," when the noise begins to reach the limit. Now all the children sit down on the long front steps while she tells them the story in very simple language. Their little bright, eager faces never fail to attract a large crowd, and to this part of the service many of the women come. The story hour is really for them, in fact, more than for the children, for they get more than the children do. It is a long, difficult task to win the interest of the market women. They are so taken up with their business. But through the attentions shown their children they have grown increasingly friendly. At the end of this service Mrs. Missionary gives out the cards and each child must say, "Thank you." This is their first little lesson in etiquette.

When the children's service is over, there is an experience meeting, where new Christians and new workers are given a chance to testify of their new faith. After this Mrs. Missionary begs to take leave of the crowd, and if there is any of the morning left, it is spent in visiting among the market women in their stalls.

That they are beginning to think is shown by this incident, told to Mrs. Missionary by one of the youngest and brightest women in the market: "I am tired of spirit worship. There is nothing in it to help us. There is nothing in our service at the temple to help us either, or in which we can put our trust. I and my husband fully intend to become Christians but the time is not now." Then, drawing nearer to Mrs. Missionary, she said softly, "I am not the only one who thinks this."

Another incident: One of the most bitter foes of Christianity in the market recently brought her little boy to the main dispensary for treatment. One morning she kept staying; fi-

nally she said to Mrs. Missionary, "Are you not going to have chapel?" When told that chapel was over, having been held an hour earlier, she said, "Why, I hurried over especially so I could be here in time for chapel."

VI

Heard Behind the Curtain

Each year Mrs. Missionary spends some time in touring. Part of her household of Lao she takes along and part she leaves at home to care for Dr. Missionary. The latter are admonished to water the plants, sweep the paths, feed the dog and cat, et cetera. These tasks are more or less faithfully performed until the day before her return, when each one falls to with a vengeance and presto! the house and garden are a veritable paradise to behold. The most pleasant part of touring is getting home to a comfortable bed and a little quiet for sleep. We spend many a night in outvillages when four hours' sleep would indeed be a luxury.

Mrs. Missionary had gone to her husband's village church as a substitute for him. It was quite evident that the people were disappointed, but to make amends for showing this they gave her a generous gift of pork. The next day, when pork appeared for the third meal, Mrs. Missionary suddenly remembered that her husband had told her under no circumstances to eat any of this meat while out, so she told Ai Peng, the cook, to take the meat and divide it with the others for supper. "Mind you don't eat it all yourself," she added. "*Ja,*" said the polite cook. But alas! politeness might be one of Peng's graces, but generosity certainly was not. About midnight, groans from his corner on the veranda announced this only too

audibly! There is some comfort when just punishment comes to an offender even if one must lie awake and listen to it.

I will just let him groan awhile, the greedy fellow, thought Mrs. Missionary. But the greedy fellow had no intention of doing so. "Noi Some," he called to the teacher sleeping near him, "Noi Some, dear! Wake up, I'm about to die. Call Maa Lieng (Mrs. Missionary), and get some medicine!"

"What!" screamed the shocked Noi Some when once aroused, "Call Maa Lieng! Why I never wakened up one of these great people in my life. Do you think I would do such a thing?" Then followed a long argument, the theme being Maa Lieng's great love for her darling cook. She would be consumed with grief if only she knew he was thus dying with a pain in his stomach!

"Well," said Noi Some, convinced at last, "what shall I do to waken her up?"

"Stand outside her curtain and say, 'Yow, yow!'"

"'Yow'—what's that?" said Noi Some.

"Oh, nothing," said the angry cook, "just a noise to wake her up with."

"'Yow yow,'" repeated Noi Some very softly to himself as he came in the direction of the curtain. Then fully five minutes elapsed before Mrs. Missionary heard him say, "Yow, yow," in a shocked tone of voice.

"Is there something wrong, Noi Some?" she asked when she could command her voice.

"*Ja,* Maa Lieng, please pardon," said he in his politest voice, "please pardon, but Ai Peng is somewhat ill and—"

"I am about to die!" shouted the cook, exasperated beyond all measure by the delays.

Mrs. Missionary sent the Bible woman to bring some hot water. She protested every step of her way to the improvised kitchen under the tree that a tiger would get her. The region indeed did have some tigers. Noi Some, always polite and ready to help if it were not too difficult, leaned from a safe

place over the railing of the veranda and said to her: "Don't be afraid. The Lord will take care of you!" This was doubtless comforting to the Bible woman, but unfortunately Ai Peng thought Noi Some was talking to him, and accusing him of being afraid to die — a thing no Lao Christian will stand. He forgot his pain, flew into a terrible rage, and challenged Noi Some to fight! "There, there," said Mrs. Missionary from the corner where she was standing, almost on her head in a carrying basket, looking for some medicine. "We all know, Ai Peng, you are not afraid to die. You would not have eaten so much pork if you were," she added softly. "Let's not make such a noise, the neighbors will think we are crazy." No Lao wants to be thought crazy either. The only medicine Mrs. Missionary could find was for sun cholera. She gave this with some misgivings, but with much ceremony and plenty of hot water. A few minutes later loud snores from Ai Peng testified to its efficiency. Then polite little snores from Noi Some and groans from the Bible woman announced that all was over, and the amateur doctor could either listen to the concert or go to sleep.

When Mrs. Missionary is staying in the homes of the people, she is given a large portion of the veranda for her private residence. She hangs a curtain around this and her little home is made. About eleven o'clock at night she retires behind this curtain and somehow the people have the idea that no sound can penetrate it. It is then that they open up their hearts and talk. The Lao are so polite that all day they have been saying, not what they really think, but what they imagine we should consider the proper thing. But Mrs. Missionary does not go to sleep at once. She has been teaching all day; now she wants to listen to what the people have to teach her. Many a good lesson comes this way and many a little incident which helps her to understand the people better.

For instance one says: "When I was a heathen I used to be possessed of the most evil desire to eat chicken. I could not

see a chicken without sinning. Now I am a Christian all that desire has gone from me. Don't you see that was just an evil spirit working on me?" Another: "And the poverty the spirits brought us! At one time all we had in the world was one old cow. Finally a spirit bit its head and it died. Then we slept on the skin three years until we had enough money to buy a mattress. Now see our nice home, plenty to entertain our Christian friends with, and never has there been a time when the rice basket was empty. It is all a blessing from the Lord."

Then the scene changes. Pe Sa, a young Christian woman who has recently married a Buddhist lad, is telling her hostess about the trials she has with the grandmother, with whom she and her husband live. "You never saw anyone so fierce as that grandmother," she says. "At least ten times each day she laments that I am not a Buddhist. One day she said to me, 'In three days I shall be taking an offering to the temple and you must pound the rice for me.' For three days I prayed to be delivered from that sin, but the night of the third day came and no answer to my prayers had come. I thought I should have to pound the rice. I started to bed with a heavy heart, thinking it was then too late for an answer to my prayers, when just then the answer came," and she paused in deep remembrance of the fact.

"What was the answer?" asked her hostess.

"A scorpion stung me on the foot."

"Ah, it was indeed an answer to your prayers!" said the hostess.

Many are the real heart confessions Mrs. Missionary hears from behind her curtain and if it does keep her awake until long after midnight, it is often more than worth the price.

The Lao evangelists are wonderfully clever in dealing with situations and getting out of difficulties. One of these evangelists once said to an audience that it took Mrs. Missionary three years to travel from the outside country to the inside

country (Lao land). It would not have been Lao etiquette to correct him before all, but the next day, to some women visitors, Mrs. Missionary explained that it usually took about three months to make the trip. She glanced out of the corner of her eye at the evangelist, who was looking very thoughtful, and wondered how he would explain himself to the audience that evening. This is how he did it: "Do you remember I told you last night that it took Maa Lieng three years to come here?" The audience assented, with a great many remarks. "Well, what I meant was it would have taken that long if she had walked. As a matter of fact she did not, so it only took her three months." They were quite satisfied with the explanation.

VII

On a Tour with Mrs. Missionary

For seventeen years Mrs. Missionary waited for a trip to the outvillage church of Cha Home; but opportunity, that fickle jade, always smiled on another. All things come to her who waits, however, and one morning, just as the eye of day appeared in the east gate of heaven, Mrs. Missionary and her party sailed out of the city in "Madam Guildie." The Cha Home church is fifty miles from the city, and the good "madam" soon ran the eight miles she could go. The passengers were then deposited by the wayside and the esteemed lady from Detroit returned to her work on the hospital staff.

From there on, four men, with chair swung on bamboo poles, had bargained to carry Mrs. Missionary to her destination. The men looked blue when their passenger got into the chair, but they resumed their natural color when she announced that

they were too slow and better time could be made by walking. It was a long, winding, tortuous path over rice fields and down canyons between the mountains, with dust ankle deep. But when you once get your feet upon a path, it smooths out before you most amazingly — metaphorically as well as physically.

The extreme heat soon made the travelers forget the dust, and fear of a night in the jungle gave speed to weary feet. At regular intervals the carriers of Mrs. Missionary's kit would stop to rest, for fifty pounds weigh down weary shoulders after a time. These men, not possessing minds trained in lucid and orderly habits, never seemed to realize that the way to get on was to go. A special invitation for them to proceed had to come from Mrs. Missionary every time: " Come, brothers, let's get on. We don't want to sleep with Mother Bear tonight."

Lunch was eaten under a wide spreading tree by the wayside. The men took out their rice baskets and dishes of curry and fried fish. Lunch time found not half the road yet covered, so the prospect of sleeping with Mother Bear appeared more certain than agreeable. The road lay deep in the mountains, surrounded by the space and silence of the jungle and the beauty of the overhanging cliffs covered with palms. Mrs. Missionary was never quite sure of that afternoon — whether it was a nightmare or a dream of bliss.

Soon all the water the men had carried in their bamboo joints was finished, and they were suffering from thirst. As the afternoon passed, many groups of people were met and they in characteristic Lao fashion would warn, " You people will never reach your resthouse tonight! " or some other equally comforting remark. One gets more glimpses of human nature in one day on the road with the people than in a whole year in Station work. For how can anyone hope to understand a country in which he has not been born unless the sun and dust have entered into his being?

As the day wore on, the little caravan gained speed and fairly flew over the road. Almost imperceptibly the afternoon dis-

solved into early twilight, and just at the ringing of the sunset gong in the temple, the resthouse was reached.

The cook rubbed his Aladdin's lamp and out came all sorts of wonderful things to eat. The maid curtained a little private bedroom in one corner of the resthouse — not too exclusive, however, as a rat, all unbeknown, had reared her family in the curtain. The resthouse was on a cliff over the river, and the ripple of the waterfall floated up through the silver moonlight. The scene was set for a perfect night. Alas! Some time in the early hours of the night a tiger entered the village and took a dog, during which performance Mrs. Missionary and the maid, unaware, were the embodiment of peace, securely enclosed and protected from disaster by the curtain of many holes. Another dog, having barely escaped the tiger, made the rest of the night hideous with his howls. Mrs. Missionary called to the carriers, " I will give anyone a tical who will tie up that dog! " The next morning, when she heard the tiger story, she realized why her generous offer had been received in such frigid silence.

Before the first lines of gold appeared, the little party was up and away. The tops of the mountains were outlined against the starry sky. Trees and rocks emerged indistinctly out of the morning mist as the rays of light were spun between earth and sky. The morning was fresh and fine and there was a brisk two hours' walk before a halt was made for breakfast by a little wayside market. The magic lamp produced bacon, eggs, coffee, and even toast for Mrs. Missionary, and the pretty Lao lady of the market sold delicious curry to the men for a penny a dish. One small boy with a stick kept the family pig, dog, et cetera, from sharing the breakfast. He would give the pig a sound whack and remark politely, " Get out, brother-of-my-age." If he had been a Buddhist he would have shouted: " Beat it! May the tigers drag you off, miserable beast."

About ten o'clock the first group of Christians met Mrs.

Missionary on the road to welcome her. From that time on, until the Christian villages were reached, various groups joined them, and there was quite a triumphal procession by the time the church was sighted.

The pastor of this church and his wife are second-generation Christians, trained in the Lampang schools. They preside over their work with fitting dignity and grace. The church services are models of order. The pastor is very musical and trains his choir well.

It was a busy ten days which Mrs. Missionary and her party spent in this church. The Christians are people of means and have large houses, so evening revivals were held in them. The days were spent in holding services in the homes of Christians at a distance from the church, in teaching in non-Christian villages, in receiving great numbers of visitors, in helping in the school, and in treating minor cases of illness and sending severe cases to the hospital.

One of the meetings held for the women of the church was of special note, for there Mrs. Missionary reproduced the inspiring talk given by Mrs. Cleland McAfee to the women of the Lampang City church. This meeting was led by the pastor's wife with becoming dignity and ease. Then the medical evangelist, who was one of the party, on Sabbath morning reproduced from his notes one of Doctor McAfee's sermons, with its crystal-clear gems of thought. There is a good Christian Endeavor Society in this church, where young men and women are being trained. Mrs. Missionary was pleased that no unpleasant church affairs or family troubles were brought to her for judgment. (A missionary is supposed to be a fount of justice and equity.)

With all that is encouraging in this church, however, there was a most regrettable lack of work on the part of the members for the salvation of those around them. When their attention was called to this, they acknowledged the lack and promised to draw up their loose strings. We all faint if we reap

not. A blessing on the seed already sown would encourage them to do more.

The journey home was made on a raft, which gave time to rest and reflect after the busy week of meetings and conferences. After all, what are we accomplishing in Thailand, much or little? To judge of this, we must see, not today, but tomorrow. We must look at the huge fabric, with its multitude of threads slowly but surely being woven into a complete pattern — diverse, interlacing threads of prejudices, attractions and repulsions, arrogant pride of ancient times resenting the influences of another religion. To some it may seem hopeless, but to those who watch and pray there is the knowledge that the Power that works in the hearts of men and nations is moving profoundly beneath the surface of the life of Thailand.

VIII

From Dawn to Dusk

The slow notes of the hospital gong, ringing out the fourth hour of the morning, float softly over the sleeping city. I awaken and find that the moon hangs poised just above the horizon like a pale shadow from the silent halls of death. As the moonlight fades out and darkness floods the scene, I wonder if I dare take one more wink of sleep and still make the early morning train to spend the day in outvillage work. While I am yet pondering this very important subject, an apologetic cough from below is followed by the polite suggestion that the princess now arise. I interpret " the princess " to mean my humble self, and this advice, coupled with my fear of missing the train, lifts me promptly to my feet.

I pause to rejoice, as I turn on the electric light, that I am not lighting a lamp, which in the early mornings seems always to have a minimum of light and a maximum of smell. It's a weird time to get up and have breakfast. I have had my breakfast put on a tray the night before, because I cannot trust the cook to arrive so early, though his intentions are good. As I finish my tray, ably and enthusiastically assisted by the two cats, a third purring sound gives the glad news that the car is ready to move.

Then, while it is still dark, I start out in the car to get the Bible woman and the two evangelists. The Bible woman is waiting at her gate, and this she has never failed to do for years. She has been up since three to get her rice steamed. No Lao woman may go on a day's trip without her steamed rice. It is the custom. The evangelists have had an extra wink, and we honk at their gates while the neighbors think audible thoughts about us.

We can go only between four and five miles on the train, but that is a great help because after we leave the train we have about five miles to walk over a soggy rice field and sandy roads in the jungle. It is cold and foggy when we leave the train, and at once we come to the rice field and everything is sopping wet with the heavy dew. We are soon wet to our knees, and the ridges of the rice fields are wet and slippery and so covered with rice that we can barely see them at all. In trying to spring over an especially muddy place, I slip and go into the soft mud over my ankle. Soon we come to the sandy path in the jungle and I begin to collect sand and my foot enlarges to twice its size. I am reminded of some eloquence used in a prayer meeting when I now descend from Pisgah to the dust of the actual: "The best stoppers are the best gleaners. . . . The grain is there but it is close to the dirt. . . . The task is humble and hard."

We meet many people on the road, always in groups, to whom we give the personal message and testimony of the

Gospel and also a book or tract. Many of them have never heard the Gospel before, and some of them have never seen that most curious of all people — a foreign woman. Many of these we meet again in the afternoon, and while in the morning some of them, at first, have looked at me with frightened eyes, at the second meeting they smile and greet me like an old friend. There is nothing like meeting people under the shade of some friendly tree by the side of the road to get acquainted with them. They like one to eat the dust of their country and brave the glare of their sun. They ask me, "Are you not tired walking so far?" "One never grows weary in the Lord's work," we tell them.

The villages we go to are near the foot of the mountains and so cold that we shiver during the first service. One needs to have the supreme faculty of imagination to think of shivering in Thailand. We go from place to place holding services and prayers in all the Christian homes, and it is two o'clock before we have lunch. We have then made the rounds in three villages, and one new household have become Christians. As soon as lunch is over, we go into another village, and after a service there it is time to retrace our steps back to catch the train.

It has been a joy to see how these new Christians are really developing and growing in grace. Sometimes it has been very trying to be patient and calm while the quiet soul of the East in these people grew and unfolded. A few bright, clear points emerge out of the cloud-topped mountains and glow in spiritual grace.

As we make the journey back to catch the train, instead of cold we have the sun pouring out the burning afternoon heat. However, off in the distance, where only billows of clouds appeared in the morning, are the beautiful purple-tinted mountains. This is a lovely spot and it is a comfort to look at the beauty in the distance while walking through sand ankle deep. After the busy day it is a joy to drop into the serenity

and translucent stillness of the jungle robed in its new coat of green.

We barely make our train, which is very fortunate because another five-mile walk added to the ten already walked would not appear very attractive. Before we reach the city, the sun has already fallen into the west gate of heaven, and when we reach home evening has closed in softly around us. And so ends another happy day in the country, from dawn to dusk giving the Bible — the teaching of our Saviour — as the only way out of the dark into the glorious Light. One sees more real life in one day out in the villages than in a whole month of Station work. And every missionary will testify that a day in the country among the simple people renews enthusiasms and opens the heart to deep spiritual refreshment.

Part Five

The Open Door of Hospitality

A MISSION home and hospitality are synonymous terms. The most humble are welcomed; the prince comes to call; the ambassador sojourns for a time; distinguished world travelers drop in; the Board members come; unknown strangers from the four corners of the world stand smiling, unannounced, before the door expecting an entrance. The missionary host and hostess take it all in their stride, smiling or grimacing as the case may be. Some of this comes back as a blessing, but not all is like the bread cast on the water. It comes back in another form. But above all the missionary home is the center of the Christian life of the community – a place where all may come knowing that they will find welcome and peace and comfort. The missionary home is a house of prayer where broken lives are built up and sent out to serve.

I

Making a Home in Thailand

Homemaking is one of the most ancient of arts and mostly of feminine design. One can imagine Mother Eve sweeping in some corner the day after her arrival, Father Adam looking on frowning slightly, for men have always hated brooms. He was wholly pleased, however, for the garden had suddenly been transformed into a home by this most homey of all homelike arts. And so it has been in all generations, from the first home in the Garden up to the present day homes, with all their beautiful grace and elegance – though the Lord only knows whether it is really up or down from the simple home life in the Garden to the complicated existence that the modern homes present.

And so it came to pass one day that the doctor and myself sailed up the great river of Chow Pa Ya to the port of entrance of Thailand to make our future home. We scanned eagerly the little homes in the villages we were passing. These tiny little bungalows were nestled in gardens of green and stately groves and looked cool and refreshing. Truly it was a beautiful land that seemed to glide by our eager eyes as we slowly sailed up the river. There was all the rich foliage of the tropics, the tall slowly nodding betel palms, with their fernlike leaves; the sturdy coconut trees; and around and above them all, more beautiful than any, the feathery, graceful bamboo, curving up and outward in its palmy elegance. That night we anchored outside the bar of the river because there was not water enough to go over until the tide came in. Later the moon rose and shone with all the brilliant radiance of the tropics. It spread its golden sheen over the palms and the gracefully swaying bamboo. Delicate odors from the flowering

trees came to us from over the water; strains of a weird, sweet music came also on the fragrant breezes bringing us a message of cheer and it all seemed to be whispering: " It is a beautiful land, this far unknown country in which you have come to sojourn. It will pour its fragrant treasures into your life and its good fairy will not disappoint you." This was our first communion with the spirit of Thailand. It was no idle dream. It has more than come true.

How eager we were to see what the house we were to live in would be like! We built all sorts of air castles, only to tear them down and to build them anew each day on the journey. This we kept up until we arrived in front of our future home, a structure which did not bear even the remotest resemblance to any of our air castles. Not that we really had any fault to find with our new home as to size! It was a huge teak structure which rambled all over the compound. It seemed as if it did not know where to end and finally stopped abruptly, in despair, in a series of little dark bath and dressing rooms.

As for the furniture, alas, it had been there before we were born! It had been waiting for us for several centuries, to judge from its looks. It greeted us with a series of cracks and smiles, toothless and legless and quite innocent of varnish or veneer of any kind. It seemed to leer at our startled countenances and say, " Take us or not." We had to take it. Some of it must have been in the ark, but poor Mrs. Noah had only one window, and that in the top of the ark, so she was quite as helpless as we were.

We refused to be daunted. Have one pretty place we would, so we banked our lares and penates in the drawing room. And was it pretty? Well, our first English caller exclaimed, " Well, my word, you made this room look smart." We were dreadfully hurt over his remark for two weeks at least until someone interpreted it to us. We then rather liked the expression. We thought our drawing room did look smart, but the other part of the house was drear enough. We never barked our

shins on any of the furniture. We could have had a dozen places to put any piece of furniture that we had. It was a house where we needed to live in the front rooms of our souls with the windows wide open.

All Occidental dwellers in the Orient have a secret that they keep to themselves in the inner chambers of their being. I am going to expose it wantonly for the first time. It is the plan of the house they hope sometime to build in their adopted country. Some, and great is the pity, never see their plans mature, but they have all the joy of planning and deriding in secret the plans of others. Some do see their plans unfold before their happy eyes, and great is their joy and delight. We might remark here that their joy is only exceeded by the freakishness of some of their houses. The next people who live in the house are apt to go mad unless perchance they have a keen sense of humor, in which case they may survive. One very frequently has to listen to such remarks as these — nay, even worse, one even makes them: "Brown's house is punk. Now our house," et cetera. "I wouldn't live in his old rotten shack." These are not infrequent remarks about some really comfortable commodious house. Truly we Occidental people do get queer in the Orient in other ways than wearing white stockings and oddly fitting shoes. So we kept our little secret plans and duly made sport of others. The doctor, who is always moderate in his remarks, would say, "I don't think Blank's house so very nice, do you?" "Nice," I would exclaim in horror. "I think it is a perfect fright. Now our house," et cetera, and we were in for a delightful evening of secret plotting and planning. And all the time we were living in this horror of a barn which played "hide-and-seek" with itself all over the compound. We called it "The chamber of horrors." "A big house and nothing in it," a visitor once remarked with more candor than tact. There was truly nothing in it — it would have ruined a millionaire to have finished and furnished it properly.

How we ever had the faith to hope that we should outlive it I am afraid I cannot explain, for teak is the most durable of woods unless perchance it gets afire, when it goes like paper. And so it happened one day when we were thousands of miles distant (note the space, please) that our chamber of horrors took fire and presto, in a twinkle of an eye, it was no more! A dear houseboy went to market to buy matches, bought exactly the opposite of what he was told — a very delightful characteristic of the tribe — and the result was a pile of ashes. When we returned, not even the ashes were to be seen. It would be an evil wind that did not blow some good, and this one blew us the reality of our dream house.

First, there were our long-cherished plans. Mine were for an open staircase, a fireplace, and wide, deep windows, to which himself added some walls and other necessities which go to make up a house.

Then there was the architect to consult. We sent in great haste for this very important individual. He came at his leisure, and I eagerly presented my frills in due form, hoping to impress him. I really hoped that I impressed him more than he did me. He blew into the gate on his bicycle, a nervous, quick little Chinese, with a huge topee hat set on the back of his head. I judged from the look of his garments that his wash had not come home the week before, but as he always looked exactly the same all the eight months he was building our house, I presume I was mistaken. Not that I minded his appearance at all; my open staircase, fireplace, and deep windows were quite absorbing. He smiled over these frills but he manifested much more interest in the walls. He thought my deep windows were a bit wild, but said, " Can do, can do," and drew his breath in in a soft whistle and then let it out carefully. Truly it was a handmade house; every brick was molded by hand, all lumber handsawed.

A terrific blowing and trumpeting one morning announced

that the company's elephants were dragging in the teak logs. Now elephants are orderly animals as a general rule, going about their business in a quiet way and with almost human sagacity. But our pony, catching sight of them as they were about to enter the gate, and thinking he had better go while the going was possible, shot out in front of them and innocently caused a great panic. The men finally got the elephants into the compound, each dragging a huge teak log. We thought that would be about all of the elephants and we were wondering how we could entice the pony to come home when one of the elephant mahouts, malodorous, affable, and easy, presented himself with an obsequious smile and said, "Where is the breakfast for the elephants?"

"Breakfast! Great heavens! Are they our guests for the day?" we asked.

"Only for breakfast," he said consolingly.

"Well, what will they have?" we inquired. "We haven't any haystacks or peanuts or . . ." We stopped for breath. To entertain a lot of elephants for breakfast was quite too overwhelming.

"You have plenty of coconut and banana leaves," he said smilingly.

"O help yourselves to what there is," the old hospitable formula tripped relievedly from our tongues. So presently the elephants filed out of the compound looking like a gaily decorated arch of green moving down the street. A new and simple way to dine out — taking one's food home to eat! And that was the part the elephants contributed to our house.

The next day the sawyers arrived, and under a little thatched-roofed shed all the lumber in the house was sawed and planed by hand. The ingenuity with which these men worked was certainly worthy of note. Their native-made chisels and planes and their rude-looking saws would drive an American carpenter to despair, but the beautiful teakwood work and the rosewood floors which these men turned out were

a delight and marvel. Bare to the waist, they worked all day long, silently and calmly. The Lao man never whistles and rarely sings or talks as he works.

A week after the elephant episode, a gentle tinkling of bells at the gate of the compound announced the first bullock carts bringing the bricks. The mild-eyed bullocks move calmly and slowly and appear inoffensive enough to a casual observer. But if there were a shrub, bush, flower, or tree that these bullocks did not get a bite of during their sojourn in our compound, it would take a microscope to locate it. Each time a tinkle of bells was heard the whole compound went to the rescue, but in spite of our watchfulness out would go a long red tongue and zip would go a plant. Then the gardener, assisted by the cook and houseboy, would chorus: "*Au tem lao!* [There it goes again!] We shan't have so much as a spear of grass when the house is built." Then the gardener would softly consign that particular bullock to the plagues, with another remark, still softer, which sounded strangely like wishing the driver the same unhappy fate. The drivers themselves, however, always maintained a peculiar attitude of aloofness from their bullocks, disdaining all responsibility for their actions. Finally by this slow process a quarter of a million of bricks were brought for the house, also eighty thousand tiles for the roof.

A group of fifty women swung gracefully into the yard one morning, each carrying two baskets fastened on the end of a bamboo pole balanced deftly over her shoulder. These women were bringing the lime which had been burned in a native-made kiln. They had risen early that morning they told me. As the first faint lines of gold were appearing in the east gate of heaven, and long before the "eye of day appeared," they were hurrying on their journey. They had, it seems, rested at regular intervals, for two large baskets of lime soon grow heavy.

"How far did you go before you rested?" I asked the spokeswoman.

"As long as it takes to smoke two cigarettes," she answered placidly, and I was not the wiser for her reply.

These women carried in all the lime used in the construction of the house, coming many "tens of times," as they expressed it. So that was their contribution to our house.

And so the house grew and grew, and our fairy dreams began to open and blossom before our amazed and delighted eyes. Every day the old architect rubbed his wonderful Aladdin's lamp and out came some new wonder. Every morning he sailed into the yard on his bicycle. "Sailed" is not at all an exaggeration of his early morning entrance. To be sure he did have some vague connection with his bicycle, but he always gave the impression that he was floating along on the air and the bicycle was sticking to him in a useless sort of way. His coat floated out behind, his baggy trousers flapped around like sails, and his huge topee hat clung desperately to the back of his head. He was truly an interesting and withal an amazing figure, but I should imagine that as a rule architects harmonize better with the structures they are building. However, he did not appear at all amusing to his workmen; on the contrary, he seemed to strike terror to their hearts, and while they apparently always worked well, they applied a little extra effort when he floated into the compound. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth," but they make better time when someone gets after them, I was prone to soliloquize as I watched his workmen. His early morning inspection was always an event for us too, for he would often bring little plans of different parts of the house for us to see. These he would produce from various places of concealment on his person as Hermann the Great conjured out rabbits and pies. He was withal a real gentleman, of Chinese courtesy and debonair manners, and under his able sway the house was finished in eight months — an incredibly short space of time for this country.

All house plans in this land must be adapted to the tropics,

and especially to that season commonly referred to as the "hot season." The seasons are divided into cool, hot, and rainy seasons. The person who named them must have been determined not to speak unkindly of the climate at any cost. Really, to be precise, the seasons should be known as hot, hotter, hottest. It is the latter season which recommended twelve-foot verandas on the four sides of the house. Our home from the outside is most imposing, with beautiful square pillars and wide, spacious verandas; the bricks have been plastered over and whitewashed, so that it presents a truly dazzling appearance in the bright sunshine. Surrounded as it is by the green trees, the crotons, and the butterfly hedge, it is truly a delight to the eye of all who pass by. But the inside is where we live and delight in our fairyland. Doubtless even to the most casual observer there must be imperfections, but we refuse to see them.

II

"The Charming Drawing Room"

For weeks the sun had been baking the lawns and hedges into a dry, crisp brown. Every day the glaring sun, and still more sun! It was altogether a barren and desolate part of the universe. This was the condition when, late one afternoon, an English friend came to call. As she came from all this hot desolation into Mrs. Missionary's cool living room, she exclaimed, in her quick, animated English manner, "What a charming drawing room you have!"

Mrs. Missionary was amazed to know that she had anything so pretentious as a drawing room. When she and Dr. Mission-

ary came from the hospital, tired and weary, the room had seemed to their minds cool and restful but never "charming." From that day, however, it became the "charming drawing room," and truly it is the place of some wonderful and amazing scenes.

The first scene will be a wedding. The decorations at this special wedding are somewhat more elaborate than usual, for various groups of decorators have been in the room during the afternoon. The curtain rises as the wedding guests are assembling from the church where the ceremony has been performed. The guests are distinguished — the Thai governor and madam, his charming wife; Thai officials; the Lao nobility; and others of social rank. The men are all resplendent in decorations and the ladies lovely in pastel shades of silk and glittering, sparkling jewels. In fact, to sum up in the comprehensive expression of an English paper, "Everyone who is anyone is present."

Dr. and Mrs. Missionary gently shoo the guests into their proper places according to rank — a difficult and delicate task. The bridal party is seated at a long table in the dining room, elaborately decorated with hearts and roses. This much-decorated table has forced Dr. and Mrs. Missionary earlier in the evening to eat their supper in the pantry, much to their delight but to the stern disapproval of the houseboy, who thought it a great loss of dignity for Dr. Missionary to eat in so lowly a place.

The guests are served with the latest fad, ice cream (only possible since the new ice factory), and cake. "Don't let us spoil our faces by not having enough sugar in the ice cream," the cook admonished Mrs. Missionary when she was stirring it up — this because at a former function, at another house, sugar had been forgotten in this new creation. There is sugar and to spare in the ice cream this time.

After refreshments, the bridegroom, carrying a huge golden

tray heaped with small bouquets and accompanied by his beautiful bride, a feast for the eyes, makes the rounds of all the tables. The bride presents each guest with a bouquet and a hand-embroidered handkerchief, highly perfumed, as a love token of the happy occasion. Then the shades of the summer evening close in, and, as if by magic, the electric lights flash out and the charming drawing room takes on an added charm, conversation breaking forth anew.

An hour later the governor rises — a signal which brings everyone to his feet. The guests murmur: "May you have great happiness!" "Thank you for a happy time!" The motor cars honk, the carriage bells ring, the guests depart. Mrs. Missionary is heard to say, as the scene closes: "My how we progress! Ice cream, electric lights, motor cars by the dozen! Why, not many years ago the only conveyance we could muster up was a dogcart pulled by a pony who ran away every time he was hitched up."

The next scenes are a mixture of comedy and tragedy. Mrs. Missionary has been warned of the first scene by four very angry and apparently very shocked teachers, who, in a long series of inflections and intonations, relate a story concerning one of the schoolgirls.

Mrs. Missionary puts on a solemn, detached look and prepares to sit in stern judgment, for the story appears true. Then the door swings open and the culprit dashes into the room and throws herself into the arms of the judge — a most irregular proceeding, this! She sobs out her side of the story in incoherent and faltering fragments: "You don't think me guilty, do you, dear Maa Lieng? Oh, how can you think me guilty!"

Mrs. Missionary does not break in on this hysterical attack other than to sop up a few tears which threaten to ruin her uniform. Long experience teaches one how to catch and tame these wild moods. One has to put on the condescending air of a goddess visiting mortals and wait patiently for the storm

to pass. At last the weeping ceases and the penitent one sinks to the floor and sits there, embracing the judge's knees. Then she lifts her lovely face to plead, "Am I guilty?" Mrs. Missionary answers her obliquely but quite understandingly, "I believe you are not," and falls into a trancelike meditation, thinking sternly to herself, "If, after all these years that we have had this girl under our influence, we have not given her a moral standard, et cetera."

The girl watches her with wondering gratitude, the teachers with stern disapproval. A missionary has on occasion to be immeasurably wise and immeasurably ignorant. There is nothing between them now but the real issue in all its uncomely bareness. To Mrs. Missionary it means the making or unmaking of a precious life. To the teachers it means stern judgment, regardless. Mrs. Missionary looks down on the lovely, girlish face lifted to her in beseeching agony. The teachers are growing impatient. The judgment is too long delayed, and it begins to appear that it will not be in accord with their Spartan sternness. Four sensitive Oriental ladies are beginning to visualize defeat; they begin to think of the importance so dear to the Oriental, of "saving face." The silence becomes so profound that one can almost reach out and touch it. Then something snaps, and four Oriental ladies, outwardly calm at least, arise, and bowing in unison like a reflex action, beg to take leave of Mrs. Missionary.

When the dignified ladies go out of the room, the atmosphere seems more tranquil; the maiden becomes calmer; she appears to have shed her tears. She sits, with her face slightly averted, while the judge pronounces the sentence, following it with much personal adjuration.

As the curtain goes down on the second scene, the maiden is doing penance. Crawling along on the floor, bowing low before the four indignant teachers, she murmurs in her sweet, low voice: "I'm sorry! Will you forgive me?" To these Oriental women this scene was befitting.

Hundreds of visitors are received in the " charming drawing room " each year, from the highest to the most humble, and each has the same welcome. Some of these are rather queer and some very much so. The latter will now appear. These are the Lii people, brought to Lampang Province many years ago as slaves from the north and put into a community by themselves. Here they have continued to live all these years sufficient unto themselves, like the Children of Israel in the Land of Goshen. They were slaves, and continued to be until quite recently, because poverty had deprived them of the liberty to buy their freedom. Life has been misery and unspeakable tragedy to them, and still is, because they live among people who despise them.

As this scene opens, Mrs. Missionary and a young Thai man are sitting in conversation. He says, " Yes, truly, you and Dr. Missionary have been in Lampang for so many years that the whole city comes to you for advice, as I have done this morning."

" Not quite all," Mrs. Missionary replies, modestly. " I dare say there are at least a few of the 30,000 who do not even know us."

At this point a babble of strange tongues shatters the air. A mad rush of pattering feet, and into the room, pell-mell, comes a crowd of twenty people, all dressed in blue homespun. The expression on their faces shows that they are entering paradise. After noisy greetings and much chattering, everyone is comfortably settled. Mrs. Missionary turns to her first guest and says, " These are the Lii people from the village."

This introduction appears to be quite unnecessary. A look of barely suppressed disdain comes over his face, and with a supercilious smile of aesthetic scorn, he takes out his highly perfumed handkerchief and waves it in the air as if to cut off the very odor of these terrible people. As he waves his handkerchief, twenty hands rise like a reflex gesture and hold twenty noses, for the Lii people have an irreconcilable disgust for all

perfumes amounting almost to a frenzy. Soon he bows himself out politely, without so much as a glance at the other guests, who are still clinging frantically to their noses.

Mrs. Missionary thinks that a change of atmosphere will do her visitors good, so she invites them to accompany her on a tour of the house. As they go from room to room, Mrs. Missionary is heard to explain: "Did you ask about that black thing with four legs on it? It's a bed. No, it can't walk. This is a dressing table. . . . No, please don't use my comb. . . . Yes, that person in the glass is only yourself. . . . No, this is not my grandmother, it's a doll — something for children to play with." A loud scream from the child to whom she offers it is sufficient answer. Mrs. Missionary puts her supposed grandparent back in the little chair.

As the procession approaches the kitchen, the cook is seen to make a wild grimace of despair and hurriedly sweep everything from the table. He remembers sly fingers stuck in to taste his wares by former excursionists from the banana village.

The scene closes with Mrs. Missionary bidding her visitors good-by on the veranda. Her cordial invitation to come again is accompanied by low groans from the cook and boy behind the scenes. But the guests depart happy.

III

Making Calls

Mrs. Missionary was dressed in her most "honorable garb," and with her retinue was starting for a round of visits in the homes of girls of the Katherine Fleeson Memorial School. Boa Kam was the retinue, and she too had "entered into her most honorable garb" and had a wreath of white flowers on

her black, glossy head. She carried herself with the air of a queen and all the dignity befitting her eight years. Here and there along the street they met schoolgirls, to whom Mrs. Missionary said: "In the next week on Thursday we shall have school again. Be sure you come and invite your neighbors."

"Oh, yes, I am coming, my cousins are coming, we are all coming!"

Mrs. Missionary and Boa Kam hurried on through the busy market, turning in when they came to a row of pretty little cottages. At once they began a very animated conversation. This was a hint to the hostess in case any small article of toilet needed to be quickly donned. Their thoughtfulness was well rewarded, for when they reached the top of the ladder all the family were prepared.

This was the home of one of the oldest Christians in Lampang City. He alone of a large family is a Christian, and the only one in his neighborhood as well. Last term, through his influence, several girls came to the school, and thus opened this place to Christian influence. After a short visit with Uncle Boon Maa and Pa Keo, his Buddhist wife, Mrs. Missionary said, "I now beg to take leave of you."

"I bid you go," said the host; "and I will go along with you," he added, for he wanted Mrs. Missionary to go to the houses where his Buddhist neighbors would be most open to the Gospel.

One visit was in the home of a girl whose parents have a prosperous store. The girl was overjoyed when she saw Mrs. Missionary, ran to meet her, and shook her hand up and down like a pump handle. The mother was pleased too, but more moderate in her joy, as befitted her quiet, studied dignity. She brought the only chair in the house and, placing it in the most honorable position, invited Mrs. Missionary to sit down. Then out came all the family silver, betel boxes, and drinking cups. There was altogether quite a display of heirlooms. Mrs. Missionary begged the pardon of her hostess, saying, "We women

from the outside country never chew betel, neither do we smoke, so if you will kindly pardon me I will not take any to-day." After Mrs. Missionary and her hostess had exchanged a few confidences about their ages, parents, et cetera, and all the children of the family had been noticed and praised for their beauty and plumpness, the real object of the visit could be presented, which was a talk on the value of education. The hostess agreed with Mrs. Missionary in all that she said; this did not necessarily mean that she really did agree, but only that Lao etiquette required her to do so. Having pressed home in her most forceful style the benefits of education, Mrs. Missionary arose, saying, " I beg to take leave of you." " I bid you go," said the hostess.

Mrs. Missionary went, accompanied by all the children of the neighborhood. She went slowly, sending a delegation on in front to announce her coming. The next call was in an immense teak house. Mrs. Missionary was ushered into the reception room and given the same chair that she had had in the last call. It had been carried on ahead for that purpose. The hostess, a woman of seventy-three, came to greet Mrs. Missionary from the inner room, whither she had fled to " enter into her most honorable clothes." The servants flew here and there, bringing out all the family silver to do honor to the occasion, and the guest had hard work to keep from exclaiming as these most exquisite pieces of workmanship were being displayed. Lao etiquette bade her look perfectly indifferent. This being the first time Mrs. Missionary had been in this home, the hostess was quite distressed because she could not chew betel or smoke, so she said, " Do have a drink of water." When she was told that only boiled water was used by the missionaries, she said, " So you never drink anything but cooked water and we Lao never have any cooked water." One of the brightest girls in the school had come from this home. " I want all my grandchildren to have an education," said the old grandmother. " In the coming days only those with an education can hope to suc-

ceed in the Lao land. Times have changed and wisdom and learning are entering from the south."

" Please come to my house now," said the little girl when the visit in the great teak house was finished. Proudly, with many a backward smile, the little maid led the way to a beautiful little modern cottage. Here the father and mother rose to greet Mrs. Missionary most cordially and invite her to sit on one of the two chairs in the house. The man of the house sat in the other. It was a lovely little home, scrupulously clean; the floor of the reception room was polished until it shone like a mirror. Both the parents were most enthusiastic over their daughter's education and the industrial training she was receiving in the school, saying, " She is Mrs. Missionary's little Christian, and she can teach her what she needs to know." This gave the guest a splendid opportunity to tell the parents something of Christianity as well.

The next visit was in a home where Dr. Crooks had been called late one night to attend a girl unconscious with fever. Life was almost gone, but by heroic effort it was saved. Nothing opens homes to missionaries as does the medical work. Mrs. Missionary was given a warm welcome, especially from the girl whose life had been saved. " Please don't sit on that rug," she said, as Mrs. Missionary was about to settle on a straw rug, " wait a second." A gentle thump from the inner room announced the arrival of the borrowed rug via the window, and proudly it was brought forth.

Thus ended the visits in that community, and altogether Mrs. Missionary and Boa Kam had a most delightful morning. The cause of education was enhanced, the Gospel preached, and the family silver aired. They went back through the busy market, where the schoolgirls called to them from all sides. Mrs. Missionary rejoiced as the girls came out to greet her. She remembered not many months back when not one of these girls had been touched by the Gospel. Now the school has opened all these homes to Christian influence. This school,

now called Vijja Nari Girls' School, has an enrollment of nearly five hundred, making it rank among the largest girls' schools in all Thailand.

IV

That Missionary Article

(An Answer to "Why Do Missionaries Not Write More?")

The sun was shining and a cool breeze wafted the scent of orange blossoms into the living room, where sat Mrs. Missionary, her hand fairly flying over the paper on which she was writing. She was preparing her yearly article for *Woman's Work* and had set aside the day for that alone. "She is working furiously," Nan Chi confided to the people. Nan Chi was the gardener. When he had come to discuss the garden with her that morning, she had said: "No, no, Nan Chi, I don't want to hear about plants to-day. Just go off and dig by yourself." Nan Chi was glad; it was easier to dig alone. But he had no sooner disappeared than a cough announced the cook with his market account: so much for meat, so much for fruit, so much for vegetables. One could see that he was nimbly calculating how much to add on to pay for his tobacco.

"So," said his mistress, "you have spent more than you had?" Then great embarrassment! Cook patters out to his mussy kitchen, where he can think better than in the clean atmosphere of the living room. Mrs. Missionary falls to writing again for the space of five minutes, when an apologetic cough is heard from behind the screen.

"Who's there?" she calls, and the cook humbly appears.

"I eat repentance, but I forgot to ask for the sugar to make the 'puddie.'"

"Here are the keys; get it yourself," said Mrs. Missionary. Oh, I ought not to do that, she thought, remembering the cook's fondness for sugar and her limited supply.

"Now where am I?" she said. "Oh, yes, we were reaching the village and" — a polite cough in the door announced her scribe. Mrs. Missionary knew that she had given him his copy for the day, but a wind came along, and the scribe too "ate repentance"; the papers were all mixed and he knew not the heads from the tails. It was a mess, but an hour later found Mrs. Missionary entering that village again, when suddenly a clamor on the veranda announced callers. It proved to be a group of Musu people from the mountain, among them a lad on whom Dr. Missionary had operated for vesical calculus. They had grown fond of this boy, so he had brought his friends to call, saying he knew the missionaries would be glad "truly" to see him. Mrs. Missionary must have seemed so at least, for they honored her with their presence for some time! After their departure the article was growing line by line when the clock struck eleven. Mrs. Missionary hastily took her Bible and hurried to the little street chapel for the daily service. I will go straight home from service to write, she thought. No matter who is there, I will not stay to teach — and she looked so severe in her resolve that it gave Nan Chi and other offenders quite a scare.

The little chapel was crowded that day for, in addition to the hospital patients, many strangers were present. The benches along the sides were filled, so the Musu brethren sat on the floor. They assured Mrs. Missionary that they did not object to this. They also assured the leader that they firmly believed all he said. He would have been delighted if they had told him this privately, but they insisted on punctuating all his remarks with: "Yes, that's so truly. We think that, too." It was a splendid service for all that, and the leader graciously concluded by inviting all the strangers to go with the missionaries to hear the gramophone and listen to some more of the

story he had told them. They all accepted. Lunch hour came, and the table boy looked reproachfully at the missionaries sitting in the midst of their guests. They were keeping him from his rice, a grievous offense. Finally, the company arose, saying, " We must now hasten away, lest the ' eye of day fall ' before we reach our village."

After a short siesta, Mrs. Missionary again drew out the article. It was stiff and disjointed. She had spent some time in lubricating its joints when a soft patter of feet announced her daily class of women. This was the happiest hour in the day for Mrs. Missionary. We'd better have a short lesson to-day, she thought. They had the chapter from Genesis, describing the grief of Esau over the loss of his blessing. Mrs. Missionary had always thought it served him right, but not so these Lao women — they wept and wailed and bitterly denounced Jacob. Explanations were vain; the women only wept the more, and the class was prolonged beyond the hour. Once again the article came out and ten minutes later found a new page filled; then there was a gentle cough outside the door and beautiful Jan Fong came gracefully into the room. " I beg your pardon, truly," she said in her low, musical voice: " I am to lead prayer meeting this afternoon and the lesson is so hard. Will you please help me a little? " Fifteen minutes later she rose, saying, " Now I understand and can explain to the others."

Then again the cook appeared, but not to talk about " puddie "! He was dressed in his best, a spray of yellow orchids hung over one ear, and he looked pleased with himself. " Another love affair! " thought Mrs. Missionary as she looked at her beaming servant. He did not mention his errand at once; that would not have been Lao etiquette. The weather and other items of interest were discussed with great animation, on his part at least, while Mrs. Missionary was wondering with whom he was in love this time. At last it came out: the lady was a pretty Buddhist girl. " No! no! " said Mrs. Missionary with fervor. " I can't have you marry a Buddhist girl. Your

mother gave you to me and I will not have my son going into a non-Christian family. Never mention this again. You can't get married!" So the cook went off, crestfallen. What else could a poor lad do whose adopted mother was continually nipping his love affairs in the bud?

Out came the article again; a few touches to the first pages and a liberal lubricating of the last, and still it was a wabbly infant. When the clock struck four, some of the older children of the Sunday School came to practice a new hymn, so Mrs. Missionary took her place at the little organ. They sang the beautiful "Glory Song," only recently translated by Dr. Wilson. The children pronounced it the most beautiful song they had ever learned, and five o'clock came in a twinkle of an eye.

Mrs. Missionary was tired and hot. Perspiration trickled down her back. Ants had crawled out of the flowers the children had brought for her hair; her back ached from pumping the organ; and she was oppressed by the unfinished article. She shut it in her desk with a long sigh, and went with Dr. Missionary in the trap as far as Pe Sook's little cottage, where Mrs. Missionary liked to go when she was discouraged. Pe Sook, whether she knew the reason or not, always spoke comforting words to the soul. Mrs. Missionary went home happy. On the way an idea came to her: Why not write an account of the day instead of the article? The idea grew and grew until —well, here it is!

V

The First Year

We have had such a pleasant, happy year. One sad thing happened, when Dr. Mary Bowman Irwin was forced through ill health to return home. This left me the only white woman

in this province, and with no hope of seeing one until several months later at annual meeting. But please do not think I am complaining, for I really have not spent any time in pining. I have taken up the position of confidante and friend to our dear Prae women to the best of my ability, seeing I have studied the language only a year. But with here a word and there another, I can understand when some poor, longing, suffering woman comes to open her heart. Sometimes it is a broken heart. The Orient has many of them and one is often moved to deepest pity for the women.

You would be interested in one of my recent visits. I had gone, with one of the good women on our compound, to visit a sick woman who had been brought in from an outvillage. We had quite a search for the little house and at last my companion, going up to a door and looking into the dark interior, was about to turn away, when a voice within said: " Is that the new missionary? I beg her to come in, for I have never seen her yet." So we went in. Every moment I felt sure I should fall through the floor on the animals beneath. Oh, what a sad sight — a helpless invalid, hands drawn up in knots, feet and limbs drawn up to a shapeless body! But the face radiated the love which filled the heart. For over ten years she had lain thus. I saw that she was on the bare floor with only a straw mat beneath her. You may be sure I furnished her a mattress as soon as I could get the cloth and have it made. When we took it to her, I thought that my little housekeeper, who had done most of the work on it, ought to have the pleasure of giving it to her. While getting her settled, the housekeeper gave her a running account of how much we paid for the cloth and how much work it was to make the mattress, ending up by saying, " The cost was truly great and the work was truly great." The poor woman replied, " And I am truly grateful to the end." I found out afterward that telling about the price and the work is exceedingly proper here.

I have just come home from the dispensary chapel. So many

patients have become Christians that we feel very thankful. Just now we have a priest in the hospital. He looks very graceful in his yellow robes. The clerk is taking great pains with him, and when he is not engaged in attending other patients, he spends his time explaining the Bible to the priest. Yesterday, while we were singing " Sweet Hour of Prayer," a company of men out for Government work stopped to listen. They were much interested, especially in the little organ. They remained standing like soldiers, with their long grasscutters over their shoulders, while we sang the entire hymn, and then with astonishment listened while we repeated the closing prayer. Then they were off to their work, where they will think this strange new thing over and, perhaps, come back to learn more.

In the afternoons we have a very interesting class on our veranda. The members are those on our compound who have never yet learned to read. One woman of forty-five is learning. One day, in the pouring rain, the teacher struck the gong and I thought, " Certainly no one will come out in this downpour." But I was mistaken; here they came, running and laughing. Another woman with a large family of children is coming, so, with a good sprinkling of children, the class is always interesting. All study out loud, so we get almost as much of it as they do.

One afternoon in the week I have the older girls in for a sewing class. It is a delight to work with a Lao girl. With her beautiful black, shining hair crowned with flowers, her pretty olive skin, and her graceful manner, she is a fair sight to behold! As she sits down demurely to her sewing and exchanges with her companions little remarks replete with wit, you begin to feel that one great hope for this country is in its girls and women.

Another afternoon I have the children for a drill in music, and the elders have given me a class of boys in Sunday School, despite my very imperfect use of the language. We soon take our final examination for the first year.

Part Six

And Is There Romance Too?

THE Thai, no matter where he lives, is hopelessly romantic, not only in his youth but all his life. He expresses his romantic sentiments in music and flowers. For the perfect scene there must be moonlight, music, and flowers. In the early hours of the night one is often wakened by the falsetto voice of some lover on his way to the home of his fair one. In the early hours of the morning he returns. If one listens carefully one may learn the fate of the lover. The Lao people in the north of Thailand, who are the typical Thai, are said to have the highest moral standards of any of the people of the Orient. The reason given for this is that the young people have the right to choose whom they will marry. They choose carefully, since divorce is frowned on. The Thai woman has a proud preeminence in the Orient in the high position accorded to her. Her authority in the home is universally recognized. She enters her home because of love; she stays to rule it by love.

I

The Romance of Euie Dum

I, Euie Dum, was born in the Province of Chiengmai in the north of Thailand but when I was still a small child a great famine arose in the land and we moved to Muang Fang in Chiengrai. We took our buffaloes and cattle along with us, and it was a long journey but such a happy one! I had no idea the world was so large until this journey.

In this new country the spirits were good to us – four brothers were born for me to care for. When the last brother came I was very sad because I could not carry him round on my hip as I had the others. For several years I had been growing weaker and weaker. I was the only daughter and my father and mother loved me very dearly but they often complained because I was not well and strong like other girls. " Such trouble and retribution with this child! " my father would exclaim in anger after he had spent more money than enough on some spirit doctor. But no matter how much we spent or what spirit we worshiped I only grew worse. Sometimes I would go out into the forest near my home and weep and say in my misery: " I do not die and I do not get well. Alas, that this bitter retribution has come to me! Shall I never be free from it? "

There was another reason, as I grew older, why I was sad at heart. On moonlight nights we often heard soft, beautiful music in the lanes: voices were singing of the charms of some maiden in the village. Alas, no one ever came to sing of my charms! I knew my eyes were not so beautiful as the stars. How could they be when they were dim with suffering? Soft laughter and merry voices floated to us on the quiet evening air from the neighboring homes. One by one my girl friends were

married, and I knew I should soon be counted a rejected maiden whom no one loved — almost an unheard-of individual in this land.

Near my home there are great teak forests, and from these forests a young man came to spend a few days in our village. I met him at the edge of the village under the tamarind tree, and when I looked at him I could not look away until I remembered my sin and my retribution. Then I turned slowly and went down the lane to my house. He was still under the tamarind tree when I went into the yard. I had been to gather leaves for the curry, and when I made it I put salt in two times. Father was disgusted with my cooking that morning.

That night the young man came to see me. It was a beautiful moonlight night, so quiet and still. A soft fragrance from the orange trees filled the air. Mother and I were spinning our cotton and father was weaving a basket by the light of a small brazier. Then at the end of the lane we heard someone singing — a strange voice. My heart trembled. "Could it be?" I thought, and then: "Of course it could not be for me! Someone would have told him of my unhappy fate."

Nearer and nearer came the voice, and clearer and clearer; we could hear the tinkling notes of the lover's lyre and thus ran the song: "Someone's eyes are more beautiful than the stars. Someone's voice is low and musical." Here the bars of our gate were reached and let down with a resounding whack; the dogs ran to bark and growl; father shouted for the tigers to drag off the dogs; and finally the strange young man sat down in our reception room, which is our wide veranda. I kept on spinning and never once looked at him or he at me. Father did all the talking, very carefully getting all his history. It was simple enough. He was from Lampang Province and had come up to work in the teak forest. Of course father knew he had come courting, because he was decked out in gay apparel and had tiny dots of powder all over his face; then there was the lover's lyre and the attendant squire he had brought along

who was a grinning, blushing lad of the village. When father had his history for the second and third generation, he and mother retired inside the house, which showed the young man that he was an accepted suitor. Then I put away my spinning wheel. After the roosters had crowed once, he left. But a wonderful thing had happened to me in that short time: I, Euie Dum, had fallen in love! How glad I was that father and mother had not sat there and frozen him out as they would have done if they had not approved of him!

My lover's name was Ai Noi, and he did not mind a bit when he knew I was an invalid. He said there was a hospital near his home in Lampang where many sick people from his village had gone and been cured. We thought the doctor must have some wonderful charm, but he said, " No, he trusts in a God called the Lord Jesus."

Now I had only heard of the Lord Buddha, but we started on the long journey to the hospital and after many days we arrived. When the doctor examined me I was much afraid, but he knew our words and told us I must wait a week and then he could help me. We were put in the cleanest room I ever saw. In two days I felt quite at home, as the hospital was filled with patients and there was always someone to talk to, but my pain grew worse and I could not talk much. Every day we went to the temple where they worshiped " the Lord Jesus." It was very comforting to our hearts to listen to these stories and I began to pray to the Lord Jesus myself.

Then came a day when they took me into a room which looked like a large white dish, so clean and pure! Everyone in the room had on long white gowns. I thought it all very beautiful until they put something over my face and the doctor said in a voice I had never heard him use before, " Breathe deeply, put your hands down." I struggled and called for the doctor's wife to help me but she only said, " Go to sleep, little sister." So I went to sleep and floated out of the window up into the blue sky. When I again opened my eyes, I was back

in my room. I was all bound up, but the old pain that had persecuted me for years was gone! "I am in heaven," I thought, but there was father, and Ai Noi, and the doctor, who said, "She's all right now." Then I took the doctor's hands in mine and said, "These are the hands which have made me well," but he said, "No, the Lord Jesus made you well."

And so I grew well and strong, and father said we must hurry home to reap the rice, but I wept bitter tears at the thought of parting with the doctor and his wife. They said, "Euie Dum, you must go home to be a witness to the healing power of the Lord Jesus, and we will pray for you every day."

II

The Golden Lotus Blossom of North Thailand

Chapter I

The first faint lines of gold were appearing in the east gate of heaven. The cool gray mist, coming down from the mountain, was enveloping the village of the Bamboo Trees in its lacy folds. It spun round and round like silver threads. In the dim morning light the villagers were awakening; doors were unbolted and gate bars were let down with resounding whacks. All good honest people gave audible evidence of being up. For is it not only "long hands and feet" that sleep after the eye of day has appeared?

In this uncertain and misty gloom the market women of the little village were hurrying out looking like tall phantoms, gliding ghostlike in the various lanes. They called softly to each other as one by one they joined the long procession, swinging gracefully along with their uniform and rhythmical tread.

As the eye of day swung majestically through the east gate

of heaven they were already far on the road to the city. It was then that they discovered that one of their usual number was missing. By a long series of inflections and intonations which spoke volumes but said nothing they speculated on her whereabouts. Some of these inflections and intonations were even then floating through the thicket to the object of their conversation. She was slipping through the back lanes going to the city as usual but incognito — minus her market baskets. As she tripped along, the tragedy of that which she called life could be read from her tired, worn face.

It was one long, weary road for Maa Noi (little mother), going to the early morning market to sell the rice hulled the day before; buying more rice to be hulled; and using the profit for food. This she must hurry home to prepare for three hungry children. The oldest of these was the lovely Golden Lotus Blossom now blooming into maidenhood. Rice! rice! rice! Food and clothes an endless circle, a weary treadmill! The neighbors, with one accord, thought her foolish, and, not feeling under any constraint to conceal their wisdom, gave various and subtle advice. "Conceal your children at the neighbors', and when you have your new husband caught, bring them back one by one." The little mother, not having asked for the advice, did not appear to feel under any obligation to receive it. She accepted her task as the necessary hardship across her path to happiness. No galley slave tied to his oar ever bent more cruelly to his task. She grew tired and old. But even a slave may have happy dreams, may he not?

If one may presume to be foolish or wise enough to interpret the intonations and inflections of Oriental market women, the sounds floating through the thicket to Maa Noi may mean: "Yes, the Golden Lotus Blossom is now a maiden and as fair as the morning after a May shower." "It may be the little mother is looking for a wealthy husband for her." "Ah, who can know?" "I wonder!" "I did not say so!" "But we all know!" "Do not quote me! I have not said so."

Ah! a little later on and the ladies of the gossip have risen to the honorable rank of prophetesses. The little mother was deep in conversation with her future son-in-law; that is, if a monologue may be called a conversation. The future husband of the Golden Lotus Blossom, however, not being aware of his honorable position, seemed to desire to do only "one good deed, dying tongueless." At the end of the first hour the victim was silent, outwardly serene but inwardly intense. He felt sure that she was about to request a loan of some considerable amount. Round and round the little mother spun in conversational circles, like a toy dancer always the same distance from her victim. At the end of two hours she stopped this flow of eloquence as if she had turned a faucet and came and sat down very close to her victim. He was now quite visibly alarmed. He was convinced that the little mother was about to propose to him.

As he slowly recovered from the shock of her real request, he exclaimed: "I marry the Golden Lotus Blossom! Why, she is but a child is she not?" "And when have you seen her, may I ask?" replied the little mother. "She is now a maiden, and the most beautiful and most desirable in all the village."

Then she sat quietly while he turned this over in his mind. He must go round and round the circle before he would discover the magic gate through which Maa Noi had leaped so nimbly. The years passed before him. He thought of his childless wife who after all his years of devotion eloped with a lover; of a young wife and little children; of an heir for his beloved farm. A young wife might be more than difficult to care for. He brooded long on this point. Ah! the magic gate at last: Had he not plenty of rice for this young wife to eat? Maa Noi watched his fortitude crumble. How she read it all! She who could not read one word of a book was so adept at reading all that his face revealed.

As the eye of day sank into the west gate of heaven the little mother was seen to be hurrying home to the village of the Bam-

boo Trees. As she tripped along, the patter of her feet sang a merry song: " Rice! Rice! Plenty of rice! " and so on until the village was reached. As one by one the curious prophetesses called out to ask where she had been, with that provoking finality so characteristic of an Oriental woman when she wishes to indicate that the conversation is ended, she clipped out the information, " It's late already." She had bargained for and gained her wealthy son-in-law. She had no intention of sharing the news.

Chapter II

On the veranda of her little bamboo cottage, Maa Noi and her daughter sat as the shadows of night closed in swiftly and softly about them. The inhabitants of the Bamboo Trees had had their evening repast of rice and curry. Each one was now in the luxurious state of refreshing himself with a roll of fermented tea leaves concealed in his cheek and a cigarette in his hand; from the former he regaled himself with audible enjoyment and the latter he puffed at occasionally. It was the one time of pleasant relaxation from the cares and heat of the day. Peace had descended on the village like a cool mist.

The Golden Lotus Blossom, her mother decided, was expecting company, even though she was sitting so demurely and innocently before her spinning wheel, preparing to work. She had arrayed herself in her one and only pretty jacket and skirt. Her head was crowned with a wreath of flowers, while a spray of exquisite yellow orchids hung coyly over one ear. The little mother watched her from under veiled eyelids as she applied herself to the knitting of a fish net. Never had she seen a girl more appealing, so youthfully attractive and so virginally drawing. " I did not exaggerate," she consoled herself. " She is all that I said she was and even more."

Presently the moon appeared over the top of the mountain and flooded the little village with its silver spray. It shone through the great cluster of slowly swaying bamboo, making

phantom figures on the veranda. The blossoms from the old orange tree mingled their fragrance in the silver beams of the moon and poured a quiet benediction over all. The whole world seemed sparkling with love and romance. That is, it did to the Golden Lotus Blossom, the belle of the village. But in all this beauty one note was missing, and quite unconsciously she leaned forward, listening to catch the first sound. It came! In the distance, like a faint echo, was heard exquisite music, soft and low. It seemed to blend into the moonbeams and then faded away. A voice was singing in boyish falsetto. As the voice died away, the melody was repeated by the sweet notes from a silver-toned mandolin, and then the voice came again.

The Golden Lotus Blossom paused in her work, with her hand poised on her spinning wheel, her delicate, lovely face lifted in exquisite anticipation. Youth called to youth and heart spoke to heart. Now the singer was near enough for her to get the words. O joy, to be thus sung about and all the people of the village listening! "Someone has a voice like a breeze when it sings softly in the jungle." Here the mandolin echoed and re-echoed the charms of her lovely voice. "Someone has eyes brighter than the morning star in the early twilight long before dawn has flushed the sky." And the silver tones of the mandolin affirmed and reaffirmed the bewitching light of her glorious eyes. Heaven and earth were made to divulge all their treasures of beauty and grace before the final climax. This climax parachuted one to earth from the lofty sentiments above: "And someone is sweet, as sweet as sugar cane," and the mandolin sweetly sings: "And so say I! I say! I say!"

Now the gate was let down with the usual resounding whack to prove that these were not visitors who opened gates softly. The family dog, accompanied by a chorus of neighbor canines, set up the usual howls. They take their professional duties quite seriously, in the early evening at least. As a reward, there were shouts: "May the tiger carry you off!" How much of this sentiment the canines really get is open to question but

they interpret it as a request to be silent and desist from their barking.

A second later two handsome boyish figures appeared at the top of the ladder on Maa Noi's veranda – Romeo, accompanied by his squire, who proved to be also the son of Tubal. He now carried his Thai mandolin tucked neatly under his arm.

Romeo was as straight and supple as a willow. His clean, open countenance, an index of his life, was aglow with his romance and showed his feeling that he was entering paradise. He was indeed a feast for the eyes. Around his head a gay headdress had been draped, with fringed ends falling gracefully over his left ear. Behind the right ear he had a cluster of little white buds which were in the act of opening and diffusing a most elusive fragrance. His face was dotted here and there with splashes of powder. His jacket was pink silk, his trousers a bright green, while a sash of various shades was fastened around his waist and knotted in a most artistic way. A gold chain glistened on his slender neck and appeared again from underneath the bottom of his jacket for two or three inches. His feet were bare as he had left his sandals at the foot of the ladder. The squire was not so fearfully and wonderfully arrayed. There was rarely enough finery for both boys at a time. Romeo got it in his time!

With perfect grace and charm, the lads sat down on the edge of the veranda, and a casual observer might have concluded that the little mother was the sole object of their visit. However, little sly tendrils of glances twinkled over to the Golden Lotus Blossom so skillfully and busily plying her spinning wheel. But somehow the wheels of the conversation began to drag heavily. In the first place the little mother appeared to have forgotten to invite the two lads to sit inside – the place for honored guests. Then, with that manner so characteristic of all Lao women when displeased, she began little by little to create a cool atmosphere of aloofness. When the Golden Lotus Blossom put away her spinning wheel – the signal for the fam-

ily to disappear into the inner room and leave the lovers alone — the little mother was evidently afflicted with blindness. Cooler and cooler grew the atmosphere. The squire began to yawn — the signal to Romeo that they were being frozen out. However, Romeo was a lover of only "one moon" and he was deeply in love, and "love is blind, and lovers cannot see." Then too the cool breeze was not coming from the direction of his lady love. There she sat with a smile of exquisite joy on her face. Was there ever so lovely a maiden in all the world?

However, another hour passed and in spite of warm love glances the atmosphere had dropped to zero. Romeo shrugged his shoulders. Romance had shriveled to the vanishing point and hot anger took its place. Even the Golden Lotus Blossom looked grieved, having grown tired of the pantomime she had been playing to the little mother, who appeared to be not only blind but deaf as well. Finally the mother spoke with crisp incisiveness. Every hint of a smile had vanished and the seams of her parchment face had settled into a hard mask. "It's time already," she said, using the term which meant late after midnight, and implying, "Long since the time when guests should have departed." Even the ardor of Romeo could not melt this freeze. He awakened his squire, who had been frankly snoring for some time. Frozen out they were, and frozen they departed!

Chapter III

Several days later a strange gentleman walked into the little mother's garden — at least, he was a stranger in her village. He was accompanied by all the dogs in the neighborhood yelping at his heels. He sensed his importance and nipped along, conscious that many feminine eyes peeked out at him from behind bamboo screens. The prophetesses had kept in mind Maa Noi's mysterious disappearance. His distinction did not consist in his size, for he was small and slender, but in the clothes that he wore, from his elegant topee to his white coat so snugly

buttoned " right up to his chin "; the huge watch chain which rose and fell so charmingly over his abdomen as he walked; his gay loincloth; and especially his shoes. It was the latter that the dogs objected to. He passed through the gate with a splendid flourish, looking out of the corner of his eye to see if by any chance the Golden Lotus Blossom might be observing his dramatic entrance. Then his heart leaped full into his mouth as, glancing up, he got a vision of the sweet flowerlike face of his future wife staring down at him from the veranda. The entrance of this elegant gentleman threw the peaceful little cottage into utter riot. The boys snuffed out their cigarettes and began nimbly to obey the quick, sharp commands of their mother to produce the guests' mats. This they bitterly resented because they had only begun their morning refreshment with the tea leaves. The Golden Lotus Blossom was sharply reprimanded because she asked in astonishment, " Mother, did you say the priests' pillows? " The answer sent her flying into the inner room and out again with three huge bespangled pillows. " And where is the cool water, foolish ones? " Maa Noi next demanded of her distracted offspring. This sent the boys scampering to the water jars, while their sister endeavored to retrieve her lost favor by producing a silver drinking cup.

While the children hurried here and there, the little mother sat calmly and with great dignity in her honorable position at the right of the door leading into the inner room. Her busy fingers were arranging the betel-nut tray, filled with little silver boxes each of which contained some delicacy to go with that delectable nut.

It was a great day for the airing of the family heirlooms! The guest, somewhat embarrassed, sat on the exquisitely braided mats surrounded by the large pillows, for all the world like a sitting hen on her nest. From this exalted position he cackled occasionally when the rapid-fire battery at the right of the door stopped to draw breath: " This is a very nice little cottage you have here. Did the father of the Golden Lotus Blossom build

it for you?" "And did he!" cried the little mother, "Not he! When he passed on, we four — mother and three children — were left behind in a hut without one board or one post to begin the house."

Later on the guest took occasion to inquire, "And how many sections of a rice field did your husband leave you?" "If he left any, I have not seen them yet," was the grim reply. This brought great merriment from the two boys who were sitting in the proper place for small members of the family — on the edge of the veranda. They had never known their mother to be so brilliant in conversation. She leaped from subject to subject.

It had been two hours now since the elegant stranger had entered the cottage. To a casual observer it might appear that the conversation so far had little to do with the subject in hand; however, to people accustomed to whirling in conversational circles in subtle reality, it had everything. All this time the prospective bridegroom was glancing shyly over the huge pillows in the direction of the sweet maiden sitting so quietly, with her lovely eyes fixed on her mother's face. They had now a puzzled, suspicious look under their demureness, as if a little corner of the veil of her mind was lifting. There she sat, a slim birdlike creature, with a poise to her flower-crowned head and an uptilt to her lovely chin that should have been a warning to the occupant of the honorable mats. Surely someone had sprinkled star dust in his eyes. Only her shyness reached out to him from the strength of its gentleness. This kindled a flame in his heart different from any flame which had burned there before. Gone were the fears of his managing a young wife. To a child raised in such abject poverty his offer would seem princely. Thus he sang a little paean to the power of rice: "Rice! Rice! Is there anything which you cannot buy!" Once again the little mother read his face with uncanny accuracy and finally, when he rose and bowed, saying, "I now beg to take leave of you," the little mother knew that she was speaking to her future son-in-law when she replied, "I invite you to

go." The two boys were bidden to escort the honorable guest to the edge of the village. This they did by walking silently three feet behind him.

As the trio passed out of view down the narrow lane, the little mother turned to the Golden Lotus Blossom and held her eye like an animal trainer ready to cow some raging beast. It may have been the first time that this maiden looked at what was about her and saw it. Her expression of astonishment changed to unhappiness and then narrowed down to rebellion. Still the cool, stern eyes of the little mother held her. It was as if with whip in hand she was compelling her to pass through an open door. While no words were spoken, the mark on that door was, "Rice!" To the little mother it looked good in every detail. Personally, she would not have hesitated to spring through almost any door that held the prospect of rice behind it.

If anyone had charged the little mother with the crime of selling her lovely daughter for rice, the very suggestion would have filled her with astonishment and tears. For the credit of humanity it can be said that she was thinking first of all for her daughter.

Chapter IV

Almost without exception, the inhabitants of the village of the Bamboo Trees highly approved of the little mother's cleverness, the exceptions being, of course, the younger generation who quoted these sayings: "Who can forbid the course of true love?" "Each one must choose for himself," and so on. The attitude of the Golden Lotus Blossom was a marvel to all, and to none more so than to her mother. After the first furious outbreak, she appeared to take up the broken fragments of her life and to be trying to piece them together with almost tragic submission. There was one thought that always silenced the younger generation and made them afraid — not one of them had, as yet, experienced the horror of famine.

If the Golden Lotus Blossom was not happy in the first few months, perhaps she was not too unhappy in her married life. Her elderly husband — at least his fifty years seemed ancient to her — was always gentle and courteous, perfect in deportment, kind in his way and considerate, and very much in love with his beautiful child wife. And there was plenty of rice. But the Golden Lotus Blossom was very young and later her prospective motherhood filled her with terror. Her courage ebbed away like water out of a leaking vessel. This did not appear to be evident to the elderly husband, nor to the little mother, the former so joyously happy at the prospect of a child and the latter still busy with her buying and selling.

When the Golden Lotus Blossom came to her day of trial, she was weak and worn and she passed so near to the gate of death that the old one and the little mother were aroused from their complacency and former blindness to drastic action. She came out of this experience with a good deal of iron in her soul. Golden Lotus Blossom became Golden Lotus the flower, but no one thought to change her name. She again awoke to the consciousness that somehow life was cheating her. She looked on the lovely face of her little daughter with an ironical expression, "Life for life," and not even the protest of her elderly husband or the expostulation of the little mother could move her when she insisted on calling her child Sze Wun (Four Days). This was to commemorate the agony of four days' suffering when the child came. As she sat tired and weak, holding her baby in her arms, she tried to put fragments of her life together. She wanted to catalogue it, putting the past and present together, but not being wise enough to do so she just brooded. Life seemed nothing but wounds! Would this exquisite child share a like fate with her own? Must everything be sacrificed for rice?

Yes, there was help coming but the Golden Lotus Blossom could not as yet hear its voice. Only vague rumors had at present come to the north. But it was even then roaming across

the low plains of the south of Thailand, sending herds of buffaloes scampering off into the jungle. Its voice echoed and re-echoed in the mountains. It calmly disputed the right of way with that master of the road — the elephant. Unafraid, it ran over the striped king of the jungle when he sprang at it in his fury. And, marvel of marvels, it rolled along on its track with nothing whatever to pull it. Neither bullock nor buffalo nor elephant was ever seen to be hitched to it. Still it came shrieking and clattering on and on until it reached the north. That was the year when the second child of the Golden Lotus Blossom was born. Driven back once for all was that dreaded vision of famine! Back, back, the monster was pushed year by year, until he was at last disarmed in all the country to the north.

" Ah, if only I had known! " thought the Golden Lotus Blossom in her secret rebellion at life. Life in her husband's home, however, went along with serene sureness. The old one was now wholly and completely absorbed in his two lovely children and they adored him. These children appeared to be about all he wanted in life. As he romped and played with them, the Golden Lotus Blossom, whom motherhood had made even more beautiful, would sit very still, like a bird on a limb, giving not the slightest evidence of emotional disturbances within. Then one day something young and gallant again tapped on her gate.

Chapter V

That something young and gallant was none other than Romeo himself. Romeo was now resplendent in his police officer's uniform, not the slender, boyish lover of the moonlight serenade but a handsome, magnetic Romeo of experience: Romeo, seeking rather than avoiding police service; Romeo, whose devotion to duty was a marvel to his superior officers; Romeo, to whom the Danish training officer gave the name of " Puritan lad," because he was never known to have love affairs

like the other men; Romeo, who rose in rank and kept every avenue to his heart and mind closed. To him the Golden Lotus Blossom was still the exquisite maid he had courted on that fairy night eight years ago. That he had not seen her face since spoke volumes for the secluding care that the ancient one gave her for a time.

When Sze Wun was five years old and her little sister two, it was the ancient one's suggestion that his wife accompany the family servant to the early morning market to see that the fruit and vegetables from his garden were properly sold. The little mother demurred over the suggestion. She had one of those warnings that arrived from apparently nowhere. Later she did not allow the ancient one to forget this. So while the old one and his adored offspring took their beauty sleep, the Golden Lotus Blossom with exquisite aliveness so vital and lovely fared forth each morning as the first faint lines of gold appeared in the east gate of heaven. There is nothing in all the world so exquisitely beautiful as the early dawn in the tropics. But the Golden Lotus Blossom was as fair as the morning itself and as lovely as the fragrant orchids and the roses which crowned her proud little head. She was a sight to stir the heart of any man, and so thought the horrified Maa Noi when she chanced to meet this lovely vision in the city market one early morning. The little mother seldom went to the city these days. By a long series of inflections and intonations she tried to convey to Mother Monday, the family servant, that she must take care of the Golden Lotus Blossom. However, that individual was deaf and had a cataract on one eye so it is extremely doubtful that she got much of this warning.

In this manner a free hand was left to Dame Fate, that fickle and romantic lady. So it happened on a particular day that she began to pick up a most tangled web. To be really precise, she began it the night before; or perhaps, if one desires to be still more accurate, she began it eight years previous in a most glorious moonlight serenade. Now she took up the web and

began to spin it in the early morning market where the Golden Lotus Blossom and Mother Monday had come to sell their wares.

There was an atmosphere of great excitement that morning as the two ladies reached the market. Some robbers had just been apprehended and would soon pass that way. There was breathless stillness as the clank of chains was heard and the accompanying police could be seen approaching. The Golden Lotus Blossom stood up on the table of her stall and there she looked for all the world like a lovely, curious child viewing the parade! She was gazing in an innocent and impersonal way when suddenly she became conscious of inward qualms and tremors of deep emotion. How suddenly one's attitude changes! A quick flush came over her face, then receded, leaving her pale and frightened as if she had been caught in a crime. Someone who appeared both very near and very far off was gazing at her with a look both caressing and possessive. The officer of the squad was none other than Romeo himself, Romeo who never had love affairs and was Romeo the puritan. He saluted her. It was unmistakably the possessive salute of a pirate!

Now here was the very event about which the little mother had tried to warn Mother Monday. But that curious lady, having but one good eye, preferred to bestow it on the prisoners. Therefore she missed Romeo and his ironic salute, as she did a note tucked neatly under her cabbages a few days later. However, that day she saw a very handsome police officer who paid her a double price for her oranges. Mother Monday was very impersonal and unconscious about her customers; hence several notes were easily passed back and forth.

These notes showed very clearly that Romeo, the soul of honor in life up to this time, was just an angry, avaricious pirate when life touched the woman that he adored. The lovely Golden Lotus Blossom was his! He had been cheated once. He did not intend to let that fickle jade Fate cheat him

again! His plan seemed as soft as cotton to the Golden Lotus Blossom as she stroked it tentatively but — and always on the other side of this " but " would appear a little tired, worn-out face of one grown old before her time. Motherhood had allayed some of her resentment. She desired with all her young passionate nature for the love of her youthful wooer; nevertheless she marked the dividing line and did not intend to cross it — all this in her innocent simplicity.

Chapter VI

The night was supremely still and the darkness tense when at midnight the Golden Lotus Blossom stole softly down into the old garden to meet her lover. The lawn was velvet to her feet as she sedulously kept her shadow close to the old wall. On the bench under the tamarind tree, where the ancient one was accustomed to enjoy its coolness, sat Romeo. How he had vaulted the high wall was his secret! As they sat side by side in such dear intimacy the fragrance of the night-blooming jasmine seemed to merge into the stillness of the night and envelop them in its seductive sweetness. Later this was to be a symbol of their dear love. What a tragic mess their lives were!

But after the first fierce emotions of his nearness passed away the Golden Lotus Blossom seemed strangely numb and a little sick, as if she were on the verge of a poignant humiliation. What she had yearned for was love, and this very love, and now when all the happiness of all the world reached out to her, the soul of the woman came to her. It was not long before Romeo sensed this feeling and he hastily divulged his plans. " Listen, dear little sister of mine," and the " dear " was a caress and " mine " was an embrace — in tone, at least, for the lover had not so much as touched her hand, " next month in the dark of the moon I shall come for you, and you shall leave this garden forever. Has it not been a prison to you, my darling? And then after that, little sister, mine forever! " He leaned toward her as if he would sweep her into his arms, but instead he

breathed in the fragrance of her flower-crowned head and then the gallant Romeo disappeared over the old one's wall. The Golden Lotus Blossom began to steal softly back through the darkness, keeping close to the old wall and in the deep shadow of the orange and lime trees. As she reached the foot of the stairs leading up to the veranda, she could have sworn that she heard the door into the inner room close softly. In the inner room, however, the old one and his darlings were apparently sleeping sweetly.

Several days later the little mother came hurrying from the village of the Bamboo Trees in response to a call from the ancient one. The little mother, with her head on one side like a bird attentive to a worm, listened to his story and replied: " O one of great wisdom, and I of the foolish ones, do not lend your ears to listen to my story! But did I not warn you? Can one have the fragrance of the jasmine if he does not tend the bush? " The ancient one, being sociably inarticulate, could not answer this flight of rhetoric, but he knew what he had seen and heard under the old tamarind tree. No eloquence could shake that from him. The little mother, with her usual cleverness, began to put things into place and smooth out frayed ends. She was superfluously frank and candid, and when she had finished the ancient one was amazed to find himself the guilty one. The little mother knew that the Golden Lotus Blossom would mark the danger and stay well within the limit if let alone. The women of the Bamboo Trees could be tempted but not seduced! However, she did not pass this cup of consolation on to the ancient one. The plan she then proposed to him both amazed and shocked him in its very daring, but he accepted it without a murmur.

The next month, in the dark of the moon, the old one and the little mother made very elaborate plans to visit a distant rice field which was said to be for sale. However, that night two shadowy forms and strangely familiar slipped silently into the yard and, creeping along close to the wall, concealed them-

selves in the banana grove not far from the old tamarind tree. Deep darkness was looped across the soft bosom of the night, and the only sound was the silver-toned temple gong marking the passing of the hours. There was a silence and stillness so profound that it seemed as if one might put forth his hand and touch it.

Once the door of the inner room had opened, and in the shaft of light they saw the lovely form of the Golden Lotus Blossom silhouetted against the dense blackness of the night. She stood and gazed down into the fragrance of the old garden. She was thinking that for six years she had seen only this garden and its four walls. She had loved it and loathed it. It had been her prison. Now she loved its supreme quiet and beauty again. From the darkness of last moon she had been asking the great question of all the world, "Where is happiness found?" She had sat so quietly and looked at people with her faraway dreamy eyes and listened to their wisdom, but no answer came to her question. People thought her quietness very charming.

Presently, to the consternation of the two dark shadows, she moved slowly down the steps in the direction of the seat under the old tamarind tree. As she walked slowly along in the shaft of light her little graceful head was flowerlike, and she was a picture of peace in the dignity of her young womanhood. But no such picture of peace was found behind the protecting screen of the bamboo grove. One of the shadows seemed about to cry out and warn her to go back. The other sighed profoundly and muttered something which sounded very much like, "I thought so!"

It was a thrilling and amazing experience that they were going through as they watched their unconscious victim, so attractive, so alluring. When it reached the point where one of the dark figures could scarcely refrain longer from audible comment, the Golden Lotus Blossom darted over in the darkness to the jasmine bush near the well, picked a spray, and,

running back through the shaft of light, closed the door into the inner room. The faint little click that followed the closing of the door was caught by only one of the shadows. It meant that the door was not to be opened again that night. Here was a second cup of consolation not passed on.

The lonely watchers in the banana grove were now left in total gloom. The shadows of a black night closed in about them. It was a time when even echoes slept and the stars began to blink. Not a light gleamed from any cottage; not a sound was heard except now and then the distant falsetto of an ardent lover on his homeward journey. How time seemed to crawl and how the hours stretched out in the banana grove to the shadows while the whole world was wrapped in sweet sleep! The temple gong slowly and in silver tones rang out the hour before midnight. The cool mist came sweeping down from the mountain. The dark shadows had yet another hour in which to shiver and watch.

After what seemed an age the midnight gong rang out from the old temple. The shadows were alert, and at the last stroke someone sprang lightly and gracefully over the high wall into the ancient one's garden and looked about. One of the shadows recognized him as the gallant Romeo, and she was aware of a feeling of disappointment as she had expected him to arrive from over the top of the wall in all the glory of His Majesty's police force — sword clanking and resplendent in uniform. But in fact he was dressed in the neat, picturesque homespun suit of the farmer. To the watchers so near and yet so far from him, he did not seem at all sure of his success. He was restless and ill at ease. Now he sat on the bench and then he sprang up and walked swiftly back and forth, the long tails of his farmer's coat swishing gracefully around his legs. He watched with eager eyes along the little path but nowhere did the exquisite form of his lovely Lotus Blossom appear. He nervously ran his fingers through his well-groomed hair in the attitude of Thai men when greatly perturbed.

The hour after midnight was announced from the temple, and now the gallant Romeo sat on the old bench, his face buried in his hands. Despair had descended on him like a dark cloud. He now knew what he had long feared, that he had lost his charming Lotus Blossom forever. He could not face the thought. She was his! He could not see life without her now! All expectation of her coming was lost, but hope lived on apace.

As the temple gong floated out the second hour after midnight, Romeo sprang up and began to run nimbly in the direction of the house. The two shadows rose to follow him, thinking he meant to pirate the house and carry off the Golden Lotus Blossom by force. However, he stopped near the well and broke off a spray of jasmine. Then, before the watchers could draw a breath, he ran swiftly back to the wall and leaped gracefully over it.

When Mother Monday let the two cold shadows into her part of the house, commonly known as the firehouse, in the early morning hours, her astonishment was unbounded. She could hardly believe her one good eye. Being admonished to hold her tongue, she did so. As the ancient one and the little mother stepped softly into the inner room, they found the Golden Lotus Blossom with her head buried in her arms sitting by the table. In front of her was a little withered spray of jasmine, but the room was still full of its fragrance. The lovely face raised to greet them was not unlike the little withered spray of night-blooming flowers. Something had died out of it too but something even more beautiful was there. The old one looked at her; his look had a real tenderness as if he were beginning to see her for the first time. But when he attempted to speak, he was like one grasping in a bag for some treasure which he could not find. Some things cannot be said! And, again, there are those who are not eloquent in words but who can be very tender in deeds.

The next morning the eye of day was high in the heavens as

the little mother started to the village of the Bamboo Trees. There had been several things to smooth out first. As she tripped along, her tired face had an expression of deep satisfaction. The patter of her feet sang merrily: " Rice! Rice! Rice! Plenty of rice! And it may be a little peace from now on too."

Part Seven

There Is Also Adventure

We missionaries all understand when one of our number writes, "I don't seem to care for adventure any more." For we missionaries have adventure served to us in every shape, form, and manner, undiluted, the real thing. We could even add something to the list of adventures listed by the Apostle Paul. However, these adventures, many of them stranger than fiction, are seldom told, and the why of this I certainly do not know. Then there are those adventures that one goes through blissfully unconscious, like the missionary who was escorted four days overland by a group of Shan soldiers, who kindly hid in the jungle because they knew that she was afraid of them. Then there was the missionary who went for a walk in the jungle and was escorted home by a tiger, and also the missionary who spent two weeks in a robber village and was unconscious of this until the band of robbers met to call her to task for invading their realm.

The list has no end, and what a pity it is that while there are real adventures aplenty, so many invented ones are told.

I

Adventures by the Wayside

There is nothing so thrilling in all the world as a real adventure, is there? I mean, of course, when it is safely over. I remember the one adventure that gave me the thrill of my life. My sister and I, on our way home from school, ventured into a neighbor's pasture. Their old red cow, notorious for her ill nature, kindly furnished us with a speed that we never dreamed we could display. However, when we were safely on the other side of the fence we hugged each other in joy. We'd had our first real adventure!

But you know when I went to the mission field I said, " Good-by, adventures, I don't suppose I shall meet you again, for some time, at least." Dame Adventure, or whatever good fairy it is who hands out adventures, must have smiled at my innocence, because the mission field is the real home of adventures. I have had more adventures to the square inch in Thailand than I ever dreamed existed in this old, everyday world of ours.

My first great adventure came when we finished our trip in a dear little houseboat up the river and were to have four days through the jungle. Just the word jungle always makes me have a nice creepy feeling up and down my spine. Almost anything could happen in a jungle, couldn't it?

About the first thing I heard when I got out of the boat was that I was the favored one in all the party, because I was to ride an elephant through this jungle. At this I not only felt spinal chills; I chilled all over. This was startling information, indeed, for I, to the great disgust of my two sisters, was the only one of the trio who could not stand up and ride a horse at a

gallop. I could not even sit down and do it. And here was Dame Adventure handing me an elephant, and everyone looking so pleased.

It was well, when I decided to go to the mission field, that I resolved to do the task set before me — difficult, easy, or seemingly impossible, I would try to do it. So — elephant, tiger, or what not — bring him forth, and I will try at least to mount, was my secret thought. I had visions of this elephant tearing off through the jungle with me, and that would be the last and most thrilling adventure of my life. I rather enjoyed the idea after I had time to think it over. I asked no questions but listened.

"Your elephant is now having his bath in the river," was what I heard next morning before starting. "That's he roaring. He was furious at his keeper this morning." Pleasant thought, wasn't it, to begin the journey with! However, I did not ask the particulars of the why or wherefore of his wrath. "When one is doomed, what is the use of going into particulars," is a favorite saying of the Thai.

"Here he comes," I heard next, as the huge creature came puffing and blowing up from the river. I wondered how much water he had in reserve in his trunk, and all sorts of foolish things like that. There was a driver who sat right back of the elephant's ears. I could have embraced that driver, so glad was I to see him, but, of course, you must learn to conceal your emotions in the Orient!

I was assured that he was an elderly and highly respectable elephant. From the description I deduced that if he had happened to be born without a tail, and had two legs instead of four, he would have worn silver-rimmed spectacles and we would have called him uncle or grandfather as he hoed in the garden — all of which was meant to comfort me. It seemed that I had not concealed my emotions, after all.

The driver kicked the right ear and the elephant turned to the right, and the left, he went to the left, and so on until he

came to a standstill near the high veranda where I was to mount. On the elephant's back was the dearest little house you ever saw. In this, with much pulling on the driver's part and much pushing on my husband's, I finally landed.

Fatal moment, and off we started down the little village street facing on the high bank of the river. It appeared to me that I might either draw my feet up into the howdah or dangle them on the elephant's back. When I tried the latter, it appeared that there is etiquette even in riding an elephant in Thailand. As I could not speak or understand a word of the language, the driver motioned for me to draw up my feet. It seemed the soles of my shoes tickled the back of the elephant and made him nervous. Had you ever imagined that anything as huge as an elephant would be nervous? I thought I should be the only nervous one, but another surprise — the elephant had even more nerves!

We had hardly been on the way ten minutes when we were nearly spilled over the riverbank twenty feet below. A very innocent mother goose, accompanied by her family of five or six ugly goslings, met us at the gate of her home. In order to hasten us on our way she began to hiss. I am sure she meant no harm, but the elephant did not appear to think so. He roared in fear. The mother goose stood her ground, so he began to back and back, endeavoring to retire from the scene. As his retiring place was over the riverbank, the driver objected. A somewhat heated argument followed, augmented by a sharp hook which the driver stuck in the forehead of the elephant, the latter used in the last resort, because there was, after all, a very warm friendship between the driver and the elderly, respectable gentleman. Just as we lacked a foot or two of the bank, he decided to pass mother goose. He tried to shrink and make himself as small as possible.

When the elephant had at length passed, he had to listen to some rather terrible home truths about his ancestry from the mahout. He was frightfully disappointed in the way his charge

had acted, and he discussed matters a long time, no doubt telling him how foolish he had been, and so on and so forth. The elephant on his part answered these remarks with deep groans and loud roars, and I am sure he promised to be good, and doubtless he intended to make good his promises. Before they reached the end of this argument, we had come to the narrow jungle path.

Alas for the promises! When we met a tiny little donkey in the path, great was the excitement. The elephant gave the tiny beast the whole road and scraped the driver and me through the branches of the tall trees by the side of the path. It was a marvel that we were not both brought to the ground. I won the everlasting admiration of the mahout by lying flat in the howdah; otherwise I should have been brushed out. The Oriental feels a great responsibility for a white woman. The poor little donkey fairly leaped past us, terrified by all the commotion, not in the least knowing that he was the cause. Followed more wrath and more scolding, accompanied by groans and low roars. I imagine that the elephant was saying, "I can't somehow keep from being afraid when I meet these terrible things in the road." The question is why an elephant, so huge, is afraid of all other creatures. Since all sorts of wise people have tried and failed to answer that question, we shall just pass it along and get on our way.

On the second day we were in the very heart of the jungle, and as we were proceeding on our way, some "wait-a-bit thorns" reached into my howdah and pulled off my sun helmet and dropped it on the ground. As things had been peaceful for some time, the driver was vocally dozing, and did not hear it fall. The elephant was sauntering along, entertaining himself with a wisp of bamboo held in his trunk. He was vigorously fanning off the jungle flies with this, and seemed wonderfully absorbed and did not notice the hat fall, either.

Well, what am I to do? I thought furiously. If I call the driver he will at once get down and leave me alone with this

far from respectable old gentleman. A little donkey, and, who knows, perhaps the elephant's mortal enemy, the Bengal tiger, might appear. I recalled that we had heard a tiger as we were camped the night before. Thus did my thought leap nimbly around, because, as you see, Dame Adventure had been very generous to me the last few days. But another and more dreadful thought now appeared: If you don't get your hat at once, you will have a sunstroke, and this made me act quickly. I leaned over and tapped the driver on his back. He awakened with a start and looked down and around his charge — all right there, so he turned to his responsibility in the howdah, where a hatless and distressed lady sat. Ah, here was the trouble! Then I pointed to my hat in the middle of the green jungle path. He looked up at the wait-a-bit thorns and then down at my hat. Of course, he knew that some spirit which lives in these vines wanted a new hat. He spoke to the elephant, and he at once stopped his attacks on the flies to listen to his master in the most polite manner you could well imagine. When he heard what was wanted, however, he began to groan, and obedience by no means equaled his politeness. A sharp command from the mahout, and the huge creature began to turn himself around in the narrow jungle path — not nearly so simple as it may sound. Another command, and this marvelous, perfect gentleman picked up my hat and waved it overhead, wabbling back and forth until it reached the front of the howdah, where he, in his most elegant manner, presented it to me. I quite lost my heart to him, and wondered how I could repay the favor. I decided that I would increase my daily gift of bananas from two to a bunch. He was very fond of this fruit, and more than once helped himself from the provision baskets when the cook was busy with the food. This always caused the cook to address him as " son of a monkey," I was told by the interpreter. That almost brought on war between the mahout and the cook.

The next day as we jogged along through the jungle late in the afternoon, and it was too warm for expression, the perfect

gentleman began to show signs of fatigue. He seemed to be hungry too, as he tore a vine from this side, a bit of bamboo from that side, to refresh himself. In doing this he brought down a shower of leaves and twigs on the driver's head, and a shower of reproof on his own.

Finally the driver turned to me and began one of his wonderful sign language conversations. We had become quite adept by this time. He pointed up to my mandolin safely tied to the top of the howdah. I wondered: What now? Am I to get off and walk and carry my mandolin? He then went through the motions of untying. I, like the perfect gentleman, obeyed, or started to, when, thinking that I was about to pitch headlong off the elephant, the driver motioned for me to sit down. I was very happy to obey, whereupon he stood up on the elephant's neck, and, holding onto the howdah, untied the mandolin and gave it to me. Slipping back to his position, he continued the conversation thus: " Open the box." Then he began to let out all sorts of queer noises which I interpreted as an invitation to play for his benefit and entertainment. I was mistaken as usual. It never does to take too much, or really anything, for that matter, for granted in the Orient. It was for the elephant.

Is there any other animal in all the world so very queer and interesting as the elephant? He has such queer tastes and fancies, and among them his love for music is not the least. As some of the favorite airs of the homeland floated out in the still jungle, the perfect gentleman suddenly came to life again. He fairly tripped along as if he were dancing a jig. We were the first to arrive in camp that night, but on other days we had been the very last. It seemed a pity that we had not had the music before, but in that case the poor old fellow might have jogged himself to death.

At the end of the fourth day a weary, tired elephant deposited a weary, tired passenger on the veranda of the Mission house. The driver and passenger went through a pantomime of farewells. The perfect gentleman groaned and knelt down

on his front knees, putting his trunk over his head and bringing it down smartly in a salaam. And so ended my first jungle trip and a great adventure.

In our second year in Thailand Dame Adventure called again. A group of picturesque mountain people had come down to the city to visit the Mission Station. "Mother, when are you coming to visit your children on the mountain?" the chief asked me one day. "Visit you! Dear me, your mountains are full of tigers, aren't they? You surely do not want the tigers to eat your mother, do you?" So the chief sat down on the floor, crossed his legs, and composed himself, all of which showed that he was preparing for a long argument. The gist was this: "Tigers, mother? Of course there are tigers on these mountains, but if mother does not trouble the tigers, the tigers won't trouble mother, do you see?" Sounded simple and safe enough.

Well, it sounded so simple, and so persuasive was the chief, that a week or ten days later you might have seen a little group of people wending their way across the wide plain toward the purple-tinted mountains in the distance. The trip was a journey of four days. Each morning we dropped into the jungle like a cup of green. As the eye of day was about to fall into the west gate of heaven, at the evening time, we came to a little village where we camped.

On the night of the third day, as I was wearily crawling into my hard little camp bed, I heard someone talking outside the tent: "Brothers and sisters ["sisters" meant the Bible woman and me], we must arise and away before the eye of day appears in the east gate of heaven. As the first faint lines of gold break we must be gone." What now? I thought, and, Why so poetic? as I fell asleep.

The next morning we broke camp just at faint daylight and we were off. Instead of the huge trees we had been traveling

through for the last three days we came to a grass jungle fifteen feet high. "Do we have to go through this?" I asked in amazement. "Yes, did you not know this?" they all exclaimed in surprise. A missionary is supposed to be a fount of wisdom and knowledge, hence their surprise. A path just wide enough for us to walk single file led off into the jungle. Unfortunately for me, it was my time to ride the pony. But when was I ever fortunate on the back of any horse? As we were just starting well in the path, the pony suddenly sprang out to one side, fell down, and threw me over his head. I know as the Bible woman helped me up she must have been congratulating herself that it had not fallen to her lot to ride first that morning.

Once again on my feet I began to berate Mr. Red, the pony, for his treatment of me, when an exclamation of horror from the cook stopped me. He was crawling around in the grass near where the pony had fallen. "A tiger has been through this grass not longer than a minute ago," he said in a low, frightened voice. All the sympathy was now turned to Mr. Red. With pale faces, we glanced nervously around. On we went, then, shortly, the headman stopped with a terrible yell. In front of him in the path were the fresh footprints of a huge rhinoceros. As the animal himself did not appear, we pushed on, for a grass jungle is no place to faint in. "Keep going," is the slogan!

At noon, when we stopped long enough to snatch a little food from the baskets, we were surrounded by huge patches of grass leveled down — a hundred wild elephants had slept there the night before. We were quite content with the sight of their bedroom only. And so on through the day! We were truly in the home of the jungle folk.

Neither the Bible woman nor I ventured to ride the pony. He was the most nervous one of the crowd. He snorted, pawed the ground, and whinnied. Even I felt sorry for him, in spite of my fall. His keen sense of smell and the unerring intuition that a horse always has when wild animals are near were won-

derful and terrible to see. A huge boa constrictor rolling himself along was the only animal we saw, but how many of the jungle folk watched us as we went through and invaded their realms we shall never know.

As we came to the little village that evening the Bible woman, looking up at the exquisite sunset over the mountain, said: "The Lord has been our refuge today; safe in the midst of peril, calm in the midst of death, we have come on our way. Many an eye has watched us from the jungle, but they were not able to come near us."

When we reached the mountain, the chief welcomed us and we told our tiger story. He seemed highly pleased, as it so well illustrated his remarks in the city. "Just as I said, mother. Don't bother the tiger and he won't bother you." I thought of my fall, but the arguments were all on the chief's side, so I kept silent.

By the time I could write back to Dr. Missionary, I had become quite thrilled by my adventures in the grass jungle, but he was not. He wrote back: "I shall send a boat to bring you home. You are not coming back through that grass again. Get down to the boat early the day you start. I will pay the boatmen extra to get you home that night." That appeared to be settled, but at any rate, a trip down the river would be lovely and one day through the grass jungle was enough for a lifetime.

After the delightful weeks on the mountaintops, teaching these queer little mountain children — who, could you believe it, never wanted to stop studying in our little school under the bamboo tree — we decided that we must return to our work in the city. On the day we bade farewell to our mountain friends we made an early start; just as the first faint lines of gold appeared in the east gate of heaven the expert boatmen pushed their boat into the middle of the stream. "The Lord protect you on your journey. Farewell till we meet again," floated out to us from our friends on the shore. We passed the curve and they were gone. Still we could hear their soft mountain voices

lifted in prayer. How little we realized what was ahead!

The expert boatmen poled with great vigor. It was entrancing to see the green jungle on both sides of the river fly swiftly past. Crowds of little monkeys conversed with us from the trees, while here and there a huge black gibbon swung himself from tree to tree by forty-foot jumps, and loudly expressed his disapproval of us.

The birds, the flowers, the great trees, with smaller ones underneath and smaller ones still under these and so on down to little shrubs, made the banks huge walls of green. On one side was a bamboo jungle, and the trees swayed far out over the river. Like huge plumes, they rocked gracefully to and fro. It was all beautiful and wonderful beyond belief.

The boatmen were expert, but luck was against them. No doubt they feared that they had offended the spirit of the river. The boat kept running on the sandbanks; it ran on a snag; it sprang a leak. Was there anything a boat could do that our boat did not do that day? I fail to know what it could be.

"Retribution! Retribution!" the captain groaned. He had not yet received all his extra money for getting me home on time. It began to appear that he was going to miss that altogether. He was grieved.

The day wore on, the sun began to sink into the west gate of heaven. Darkness would soon be upon us. Dense unpenetrable jungle lined the riverbanks. What a situation — no place to stop and we could not go on! Oh, how real the prayers of the mountain people seemed!

At length a poleman recalled a small cleared place in the dense bamboo jungle on the right. A boat had once turned over there. The party, being forced to repair and float their boat, had made the clearing. Hope was renewed; the men bent on their poles with renewed vigor. It was a tiny clearing on the high bank to which we climbed with great difficulty. Just as my tent was pitched, dense darkness settled down on us like a blanket.

The men at once made up huge fires to keep off the tigers because we were in a tiger-infested jungle. The first things we saw were small woven bamboo mats on the bank. These are spirit charms to keep off the tigers, and were left by the last ones to camp there. A sharp warning and one to cause the strongest heart to quake!

Soon the cooking of supper was in progress; the curry pots began to boil and send off a delicious fragrance, and we were almost a cheerful family. Almost but not quite! Our ears were always straining for the sound of stealthy footfalls in the jungle. An appalling darkness surrounded our camp, so profound that it seemed as if one might reach out his hand and touch it. And always the question — the horrible question, "What is there out there in that black abyss?"

As I sat down to my supper, I noted with no small satisfaction that the cook had placed my table with a fire between it and the vast darkness of the jungle. A tiger fears only two things in all this world — the human eye and a fire. So the only real weapons are a fire by night and the ability to meet the tiger eye to eye in the day, for he will never touch the one who has the courage to look him down.

II

A Trip to Elephant Mountain

A stranger lot of people than those who live on Elephant Mountain could hardly be imagined. These people are of Chinese origin, and our first introduction to them was about two weeks after Dr. Briggs, their beloved "father," had left for America. They came to Chiengrai in a crowd of some twenty, but only two had courage to appear before us on the

veranda; the rest waited under the house to see how those courageous ones would fare at our hands. Seeing that we were not at all fierce, and that we did not intend to beat their heads, as they afterward confided, they came promptly running up the steps and passed all kinds of flattering speeches on their new "Paw and Maa." Since then we are always very glad whenever we hear a great noise of running and laughing, for we know that our children from the mountain are coming for a visit. They shock the Lao people, who have such polished manners and never under any condition get off their dignity. It is true that the mountain people are innocent of any culture, but they say just what they think and it is a pleasure, sometimes, to hear their original thoughts. They kept begging us to make a visit to their mountain, saying there were many old people, unable to travel to the Station, who would be glad to see us; and so we went.

We had no difficulty in getting our five carriers for the trip, for Lao people enjoy a little outing as well as anyone. We started bright and early one morning, and it was not long before we began to ascend. The shade of the trees on the mountain side was cool and pleasant after the heat of the plain, and the faint odor of the loam rose fragrantly from the dense underbrush along our path. The ascent was for a while hardly perceptible, but soon the clear, sparkling water of the little brook told us that we had reached mountain soil. It was after noon when the way began to be difficult, and from then on it was a continuous climb from height to height; we often stopped, as the carriers were tired. When we reached the top of each peak, we could see many little villages nestled under some protecting hill, for these mountaineers live in tiny settlements wherever they can find places level enough to plant their fields of rice, corn, and poppies.

When we arrived at the first little village, there was great excitement. Out came the big dogs, disputing our advance, and giving way only to the fierce wielding of the headman's sword.

Then the people caught sight of us and came running out to meet us, laughing, gesturing, and assuring us that we were welcome. They were mostly women, the men being off at a wedding, so they at once surrounded their " Maa " and my dusty riding habit was subjected to a fierce fire of criticism. These women are mightily interested in dress and very artistic in their own apparel. They were extravagant in admiration of what it pleased them to call my " beautiful white hands," which were none too white after a month spent in outvillage work. " Would you mind if we touched your wife's hands? " they timidly inquired of Dr. Crooks, and one old lady, on the excuse of her age, patted me tenderly on one cheek, much to the horror of the Lao carriers. We had to leave this village, as we expected to stay at that of the governor, so on we hurried. There we found the ladies all getting ready for a wedding, and very gay they looked with their numerous silver ornaments. Great pieces of silver adorned their necks, and earrings hung from their ears and rested on their shoulders; on arms and fingers glistened bracelets and rings without number. Their jackets were beautifully embroidered and they wore the mountain skirt, a model of artistic embroidery. They were all ready except for their headdress when we came on the scene, and this was being wound around their heads by a cross old woman who scolded all the time as she wrapped layer after layer around each giddy head, for all were laughing and chatting in the way one would expect of a wedding party.

The house of the governor was a long, barnlike structure, built with a space for ventilation between each board. It was rather dark when we entered and were taken to the seat of honor in one corner, wondering, as we went, on what we were hitting our heads. We discovered the cause as our eyes became accustomed to the smoke and dust: huge pieces of bacon were suspended all around the room from the ceiling. The governor greeted us with a cordial dignity which must be an heirloom from his ancestors in China. He told us to have our tent

pitched where it pleased our hearts, and after we were settled, he sent me a fine chicken and a basket of rice to the doctor, and his son came to say that whatever they had was ours for the asking. The evening was beautiful, so people from neighboring villages gathered to see us. It was a weird scene. High up above us, the huge elephant head of the mountain was plainly visible in the clear moonlight; and all about were these queer, queer people, with their unknown tongue, laughing and chatting, all happy and so simple and not afraid to show their joy. After conversation with such as understood some Lao, we brought out the gramophone and great was their joy. At last we begged to go to rest and they bade us good night. We were just closing our eyes when some belated visitors called softly, "Friends, friends," from outside the tent, but their friends were too tired to break the silence, and with the patter of departing feet there floated back to us the sweet music of one of their mountain lutes, growing fainter and fainter as they wound in and out on the path. We slept as best we could, for the wind came roaring down off the high mountains and with every gust the tent threatened to depart into the valley beneath. Dogs barked; horses, cows, pigs, and sheep kept up a sort of perpetual warfare, and it was bitterly cold.

The next morning we gathered a few people for a short service and explained why we had come; then the evangelist we had brought with us gave a Gospel talk in Lao, which they very imperfectly understand. The governor's son said that someday they all intend to come into our religion. They all seemed busy people for after breakfast the men hurried away to the rice fields and the women were working on their dresses. As they had just finished weaving, they were now marking the patterns on their skirts with blue indigo. Only the children did not work, but all of them who were of sufficient age tended the babies. If there were any drones in camp, we did not see them. The only person who did not appear to be an active part of this beehive was the governor himself. He seemed unconscious

of the noise and confusion about, and told us many interesting things of his life and his children. He expressed a desire to see " the outside country," but added, with a winning smile, " I am too old now; if I should start I would never attain."

The second evening the governor's son came to us after the service and said: " You were so kind as to play the gramophone for us last night; perhaps you would be pleased to hear our music? It is very evil indeed compared to yours." We were delighted, for these people are famous for their musical talent, and all the wild freedom of their mountain life and the beauty and picturesqueness of their homes are woven into the harmony of their music. So his best musician was sent for and he played a melody of a clinging sweetness and melancholy. " Do you understand the story he is telling? " asked the governor's son. " This is a sad tale; he has neither father, mother, nor wife. That is why he plays so low, because his heart is heavy." Then the singer offered to dance and play his lute at the same time. So, half stooping, half standing, he whirled and whirled until the music seemed to come from a perfect circle, the sweet, low air telling all the time of his lonely life.

There is something wonderfully poetic, and pathetic as well, about these people. Alone in the mountains, they are sufficient unto themselves in most things. They have fields of rice and corn, gardens of poppies and numerous vegetables, which people in the plains have not. They represent as nearly as possible an independent community; yet they must have salt from the plains, and quinine too, now that they know of its usefulness. We were touched with the great love these people had for their good friend, Dr. Briggs, and we marvel at the way he had won their confidence.

After two days we were obliged to turn our faces homeward, as there were cases in hospital that could not be left any longer.

III

Two Hundred Miles of Jungle via Kansas City Flier

The weekly mail had just reached a Mission Station in North Thailand. It was not only five days late, but in addition to this was soaking wet as well. Ai Pawm was explaining to the missionaries that it was only by the help of the Lord that it came at all, and they should be thankful even if it was wet. Ai Pawm was the mail carrier and these words of exhortation seemed wholly unnecessary, seeing that the missionaries had hailed his appearance with great joy and received the damaged mail without a murmur. Then, having delivered himself of this good and pious advice, Ai Pawm, seeing that he was likely to receive scant attention from then on, bowed low with, " I beg to take leave of you," and hurried off to deliver the rest of his damp burden. Dr. and Mrs. Missionary, already deep in wet, soggy home letters bade him a hasty, " Go in peace."

" Here is a letter that will interest you," said the husband presently, turning to his wife and handing her a letter. She glanced over the first sentence; then they gazed at each other in speechless dismay: they were to be transferred to a Station two hundred miles up in the jungle. They had but barely settled, as it were, and the tragedy was still fresh in mind. Moving in America has become an art, but moving in North Thailand — well, to make a long calamitous story short, it is very artless.

Two months later Dr. and Mrs. Missionary stood on the veranda of the bare bungalow and watched the long bullock train bearing their goods out into the jungle. " Nan Chi," she called to the head driver. " Don't let any of my precious dishes get broken." They will be all right," said Nan Chi complai-

santly, " if only some evil spirit does not bite the bullock's heads." " What then? " she called after the retreating figure. " Why, then the bullocks will — " but the rest was lost in the din of the moving caravan. Two days later the missionaries were to leave, but alas! there were no comfortable trains to whirl them over the two hundred miles of jungle road. Yet in those early days three modes of travel were possible in Thailand and Mrs. Missionary, though she had come as a bride into the country only a few months before, had tried them all. The first trip she took in truly royal style — on the back of a huge elephant. Four days he carried her over the mountains, up hill and down dale, and was withal as gentle as a kitten. One day when some rude " wait-a-bit thorns " reached out and pulled her hat off and threw it on the ground, the elephant politely picked it from the weeds and handed it up to her. That elephant was a perfect gentleman — but slow. Mrs. Missionary said after that trip, " It took too much time to be royal." She took the next trip in a chair fastened on two long bamboo poles and carried by four sturdy men. When the first hill came in sight, the men began to groan softly and to remark *sotto voce* how difficult the ascent would be with her in the chair. Kindhearted Mrs. Missionary walked until her feet were blistered. After that she said, " No more trips in a chair for me," and that settled it. Now on one of these trips she had ridden a pony, so she concluded to try one on her next trip. That small pony was not the dignified gentleman the elephant was. Of that she was well aware as she clung frantically to the saddle and hoped for the best. But, after all, the pony seemed the most satisfactory, and in considering their trip to the Rim of the Earth, as they called their future home, being so far in the jungle, they decided to go by pony, taking their camping outfit on ponies as well. " We shall call the pack ponies the Kansas City Flier," Dr. Missionary announced one morning at breakfast. He is from Kansas City, and no one has ever been able to " show " him the equal of that place. So Kansas City Flier it

was, although Mrs. Missionary demurred, saying that it sounded so very destructive, and begged him to remember that there would be dishes along.

At last the great day for starting came and the Kansas City Flier, or the K.C.F. as Dr. Missionary had come to call it, was drawn up in the front yard. " What sour-looking little ponies," said Mrs. Missionary as she stroked a shaggy little fellow. " Rude too," she added, as he made a dive for her glove. The ponies had their wooden saddles on, into which the baskets containing the camping outfit would go, and they were snatching a few bites from the lawn when Ai Ta, the pony boy, came to load up. The ponies were quite positive in their objections to leaving the lawn, but the boys finally had all the baskets on; then they ran for their sandals and, amid the farewell cheers of their friends, the journey was begun. At the first steep hill, various articles put on by the boys at the last moment began to fall from the loads. Ai Brass, the cook, was taking rice for the whole trip, whereas he was allowed only enough to last until the next market was reached. This bag of rice refused positively to stay on anyplace and, to avoid delay, Mrs. Missionary offered to take it on her riding pony. They had no sooner started again than Ai Ta began to shout, waving his arms in the air like a madman. His bundle of clothes had fallen off — a huge bundle it was. She wondered who had been foolish enough to lend Ai Ta part of his wardrobe. But there they were, and the procession stopped so she took Ai Ta's finery on the other side of her pony. What a procession it was! At the head was tired, hot-looking Mrs. Missionary, who grabbed and glared, first at a bag of rice on one side of her and then at a huge, gay bundle on the other. Close behind, the doctor was leading his pony covered with odd bundles from the loads, looking for all the world like a gaily moving market stall. Ai Ta followed closely, zealously guarding his borrowed finery. Close on his heels thundered the six enraged pack ponies; then came Brother Nan the table boy. It was Ai Ta who had sug-

gested that it would not be wise for Brother Nan, who was very slow, to walk ahead lest the ponies run over him, nor yet to be the last, lest he be lost altogether. Ai Brass brought up the rear with various other articles from the loads. As the sun was beating down with all the cruelness known only in the tropics, the missionaries hurried on ahead to the noon rest-house where they would stop for lunch. It was sometime after they reached there that the K.C.F. hove in sight. When the ponies were unloaded, Ai Ta came and sat down near his Nemesis, coughed politely to attract her attention, and then with a "I am a guilty culprit" look on his face began an elaborate conversation on the weather. "Did you find the sun hot?" he inquired with great solicitude. Then followed a most animated talk, mostly one-sided — on Ai Ta's side. "Did you find the mountains steep?" he finally asked, skillfully turning the conversation into the channel where he wanted it. "Where they were steep, they were steep," she answered, and then she added, *à la* Lao, "But I managed by the help of the Lord to get up and down them." "You did better than that wicked little beast with the dish basket then," said Ai Ta. "Ever since he fell I have been so hothearted, wondering how many of your precious dishes he broke." So broken dishes were the cause of Ai Ta's "I am a guilty culprit look" and the elaborate conversation leading up to his confession! "He is an evil beast, that one," continued Ai Ta, adroitly throwing himself clear of blame and saving himself from the reproof he no doubt deserved. While his conversation was going on, the other boys stood at attention, ready to share Ai Ta's guilt in case he was unsuccessful in putting the blame on the pony. Having thus escaped, they became as happy as larks once more, and doubtless in private praised Ai Ta for being such a diplomat. Ai Brass, seeing that no reproof was coming, ran to the brook for his bath and in an incredibly short time bowed before the missionaries with: "The food is all gathered together. I invite you to eat." They found a delicious lunch ready, such

a meal as makes cooking in the East always a mystery. Then the boys opened their baskets of steamed rice with pots of curry and fortified themselves for the afternoon mountain-climbing.

As the day was fast fading away Dr. Missionary found to his despair that they could not reach the next resthouse until long after dark. They had far too much respect for the tigers that lurk in the forest to travel after night had come. On and on they hurried, but longer and longer grew the shadows. The sun dropped behind the mountains and darkness swept down upon them. They had just reached the crest of a low mountain, and found there a little booth which some former travelers had used. The roof was made of broad teak leaves, sloping to the ground in the rear. The walls were conspicuous by their absence, but were soon supplied by a long curtain. This made a good shelter for the night. It certainly had been a hard day, and, not caring for any more misfortunes, Ai Ta built up a huge campfire to keep off tigers which might grow too familiar under the cover of darkness. Several other groups of belated travelers were forced to stop, so they were soon a merry camp with all their fires. Later the moon rose over the neighboring mountains and shone with all the brilliant radiance of the tropics; it transformed the rude jungle into a paradise; dewdrops into glistening diamonds. The heat and trials of the day were forgotten. The cooling breeze sang in the majestic teaks above them, and quietly they yielded to the soothing voice of Morpheus and were soon in his arms fast asleep.

Mrs. Missionary thought she had only begun her first dream when she was awakened by Ai Brass rattling his pots and kettles. "Ai Brass," she called sleepily. "What are you doing getting breakfast at the mid-night?" "I'm not getting breakfast at the mid-night," was the laconic reply. Ai Brass considered four o'clock in the morning too early for lengthy conversation. Then Mrs. Missionary peeped through the curtain and, sure enough, Brother Nan was up too and was laying the table for breakfast. The morning was raw and cold. Break-

fast over, Mrs. Missionary started to walk, thinking the ponies would soon overtake her. There was an accident which delayed them, and Dr. Missionary stayed to help, so, as she was walking fast, she soon found herself alone in the solitude of the jungle. A sudden fear came over her; she was afraid to retrace her steps, afraid to go on. She stood with beating heart when, on the path over the mountain, a Buddhist priest, clad in his flowing, graceful yellow robes, could be seen approaching. Instantly there came into her mind the remembrance of the priest who had shocked his whole province with the cruel murder of a traveler, and that for only a petty sum. As the priest had already seen her, there was no question about what she must do, and she went forward to meet him with the usual salutation: " Where are you going? Where did you rise from? " He did not answer her questions, but asked: " Are you alone? Where is your company? " " My friend," said Mrs. Missionary, " The rest of the company is just in the rear. You will soon meet them. May you go in peace," she added, as she hurried by. " May you also go in peace," he called after the retreating figure.

Soon the faint tinkle of bells in the distance warned Mrs. Missionary of an approaching cattle train. Presently, around the curve in the narrow mountain road, the mild-eyed bullocks appeared. As the road was narrow and their horns long, she scrambled up the mountain side while the bullocks eyed her in alarm. These gentle animals are far less to be feared than their masters. Since the cattlemen are constantly being exposed to robbers, some few of them being in that class themselves, they go armed for the fray. Great wicked-looking swords are sheathed in scabbards, ready for instant use. Across their shoulders were the long old flintlock guns. How she longed for sight of the K.C.F. when it came time to pass these fierce cattlemen! Presently, after many adventures were over, Ai Ta came panting along, leading her pony. " O Ai Ta," said his mistress breathlessly, " what made you so long in coming? "

"We were not long," said Ai Ta, on the defensive as usual. "You ran so fast." "Ran!" "Why, I never ran." "Well, we would call that running in this country," said Ai Ta, with a reproachful look on his face. "I think after this, Ai Ta," she said, "I will travel with the K.C.F. and not ahead of schedule time." "I think you would better," said a voice at her elbow, and Dr. Missionary had come on the scene.

When they reached the resthouse that evening it was surrounded by a cloud of dust. Several bullock trains had just come in and were being unloaded before the animals were turned loose in the jungle for their evening meal. The headmen had already established themselves in the most comfortable part of the house, which they at once vacated for the missionaries.

They were especially delighted at seeing Mrs. Missionary; it was not every day that such a curiosity as a white woman put in her appearance at the resthouse. When she sat, word was passed along: "She is sitting. Oh, do look, she is sewing! And what is that bright thing on her finger as she sews?" Ai Brass explained the thimble. When she tripped over the step, there was great excitement. "Fine," they said; "now we shall hear how this white woman swears!"

"Such trouble as you do make for yourselves," they said, when the missionaries were seen eating with forks. "A most peculiar way these white people have of eating their rice," was their final decision.

When darkness came on Dr. and Mrs. Missionary were hidden from their curious eyes; then those jungly-looking cattlemen were transformed into artists and all listened entranced to the weird, sweet music of their lutes and horns. Interspersed with the music, someone gifted in song usually composes and sings as the music directs. That night one sang of the valiant heroes of his province, who had died under the shadows of their city wall, defending it against an invading host. The music was weird and beautiful: now joyful, as the heroes went

with brave hearts to the conflict; now sad, as they fell stricken in battle. When he had finished, the music began again, bright and beautiful: for then a young man began a romantic love song. He bethought himself of his sweetheart, far away in the home village, and thus he described her: Her eyes were brighter than the stars in the heaven; her hair as fragrant as the most precious flower. And she was so sweet: as sweet as sugar cane was this little sweetheart. Thus the evening wore along as the singers opened the burden of their hearts, and the musicians played, now joyful, now sad, as the story went. Suddenly the music ceased — there was absolute silence, painful in its intenseness — then the bloodcurdling call of a tiger fell upon the startled company. Instantly the men sprang to their cattle, fires were kindled afresh, all became alert and active. The ponies were wildly excited and the boys were beside themselves with fear. As the first fires leaped and blazed, the tiger retreated into the jungle, his cry growing fainter and fainter until it was lost in the still solitude of the forest. Less than two weeks before a man had been taken from the veranda of that house. No fire had been kept; about midnight the tiger had seized his victim and was making back up the mountain side when the man's companion rescued him after a valiant fight. Yet there are those who say, "The Lao men are cowards!"

When Mrs. Missionary remarked to Ai Ta that she did not envy the man on the outer row of the veranda that night, he laughed, saying, "A tiger never takes a sleeping man until he moves, and he on the outside is as safe as the one inside." "Moral:" added Dr. Missionary, "Don't roll around in your sleep or the tiger will get you." Long after that, Mrs. Missionary fell asleep. She did not intend to sleep that night, but to watch for Mr. Tiger. He appeared, however, in her dream and she put him to flight with her hairbrush. They were in the midst of celebrating her victory with great pomp when suddenly the music of the band turned into the din of Ai Brass's

pots and kettles, and another day had begun. After breakfast, the missionaries mounted their ponies and in the dim morning light bade farewell to their friends of the night before and hastened away.

Long, long, they waited that noon for the K.C.F. At last Ai Brass appeared, and behind him were the ponies crawling along like six lazy snails. Ai Brass came in, kneeling down in native fashion before his mistress, and began: " O Mem, won't you eat a little dinner to-day? If you will only eat a little dinner, then I can have such a good rest." It turned out that the " little dinner " was a cold lunch from the food box, but when his mistress consented, Ai Brass was wonderfully revived at once. He ran to the market stall and soon returned with rice for his own dinner, wrapped in a banana leaf. " Only this much for a fuang [the second smallest coin]," he said, showing it to his mistress. " 'T is such a price! Such a price! But I did not have time to steam my own." Still complaining over the price, he curled himself up in the corner and went to sleep. Now Ai Brass could prepare a meal in the twinkle of an eye — a stir here and a poke there and presto! the meal was ready. But Brother Nan was certainly a different story, thought Mrs. Missionary, as she watched him prepare the " little dinner " that day. But even Brother Nan had his strong points. He never lost his head, as Ai Brass had been known to do, and wrapped up the pots and kettles in " Mem's " bedclothes. Only once on the whole trip did Brother Nan grow excited, and that was the day of the " little dinner." Ai Ta had borrowed, without asking, Brother Nan's precious sword. When it was time to cut the bread, he missed his treasure and sprinted off to the jungle at a great speed in search of Ai Ta. Brother Nan's limbs, from his thighs to his knees, were beautifully tattooed; when he returned with his dusty sword that day, his mistress looked just in time to see him putting his tattoo to a new and marvelous use — a tea towel. Then he calmly cut the bread with his sword and served the " little dinner."

Dinner over, the weary travelers followed Ai Brass to the Land of Nod. They were awakened by a flock of crows coming for the remainder of their lunch. It was already late and there was a long stage to be made before dark. Hurrying away, they soon came to the foot of a high range of mountains. The air seemed filled with dust or smoke. Boom! Boom! Crash! The boys stopped to listen; clearer and more penetrating came the sounds. A huge tongue of fire shot up from behind the mountaintop. "The forest is on fire," called Ai Brass, who was in front. "Paw, Maa, Buddha Chow," said Brother Nan, solemnly calling on his ancestors and Buddha, "and our road lies over that mountain! May the Lord help us!" he added quickly, remembering that he was with the missionaries. Soon the flames came crawling down the mountain side, a glittering, gleaming serpent, licking up the grass and underbrush as it passed. They were almost stifled with the smoke and heat and deafened by the loud reports of the bamboo as it was caught by the flames. The roar and din were terrifying; as the fire swept nearer and nearer, sight and breathing became almost impossible. The voices of the boys sounded hollow as they called to the terrified pack ponies, trying to keep them in the narrow trail. Above this roar could be heard the shrieking of the birds driven from their homes by this fiery serpent; the pathetic, frightened wail of the monkey as he swung himself from tree to tree in his escape. At length they came to the summit of the mountain, where a fierce wind fanned the flames, and here the road led between two high walls of flame. Only by covering their faces could they pass, so intense was the heat. Across the summit the choice of road had to be left to the head pony. Fortunately he had been over the road before and could be trusted to take the best trail. For two hours they stumbled along through this fiery furnace and then, to their great joy, they came into the cool, shady valley beneath. "Were you afraid, Ai Ta?" asked Mrs. Missionary, when he came up to help her onto the pony. "What shall we fear?" smiled Ai Ta.

" Jesus said, ' Lo, I am with you alway.' " And then for once Ai Ta was strangely silent. After the unspeakable horror of the afternoon no one seemed to feel like talking; then too they needed to hasten lest darkness should come upon them before they arrived at the resthouse.

That evening the rest house proved to be a palace, having been built for His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Thailand when he made his famous visit to the north of Thailand. The yard had been made to represent a park; trees, shrubs, and flowers had been planted; the whole effect was beautiful. On one side was a miniature mountain, planted with characteristic shrubs and trees from the base to summit. A broad drive of gravel led to the entrance. A wide veranda, octagonal in shape, was the entrance to the house. Pillars were covered with orchids, and hanging baskets of long ferns were suspended from the ceiling. This veranda served as reception room; back of it was the royal dining room. On the right were the sleeping apartments of His Royal Highness, and on the left, those of his staff. To the rear were the bathrooms and cookhouses. This remarkable palace had no nails in its whole construction; no lumber except in the floor and framework; the rest was bamboo put to its infinite number of uses. The walls were mats woven in colors, beautifully blended, of green and white in the sleeping apartments; white only in the dining room; green for the bathrooms; while the reception hall was finished in black and white. One large mat covered both the dining and reception room floors, woven complete and perfect in construction. Surely one need not complain if a lifetime must be spent in such a house, yet it was built for a boyish prince who occupied it one night. But it has sheltered many a weary traveler since.

Mrs. Missionary was loath to leave this beautiful house when Ai Ta led her pony up the next morning. From that time on the scenery became more and more beautiful and lured them on and on. When once the top of the highest mountain range

was reached, they were rewarded by a most magnificent view. In the far, far distance great, bleak mountains lifted their barren heads until their summits were hidden in the blue above. The valley stretched for miles between, like a deep well of green scooped out by some mighty hand. Now and then a daring peak raised its head, all covered with a dense jungle growth. Some days the journey led into deep, dark canyons, where the sunlight never reached except for a few minutes at midday. In these damp, cool places were the most beautiful ferns, their leaves reaching great lengths. The mountain stream sang softly as it ran over its pebbly bed, and here and there spoke in harsher tones as it made way for a quick descent. Then its voice echoed and re-echoed through the canyon and the deep stillness was broken.

In the steep mountain passes steps were cut for the ponies to go up and down: this they do with remarkable surefootedness. These ponies did not seem to fear the steepness of the road, but when the rains have washed out the narrow paths on the mountain side, then there is danger. For this very cause the K.C.F. had its only wreck — " A washout on the line." The boys were tired and, growing careless, lagged behind, letting the head pony choose the road. When the pony reached the place, they saw it, alas! " just too late." The basket of the head pony hit against the rocks on the inside of the trail, swerved, and swung out, and, to the boys' unspeakable terror, he went plunging down the mountain side. Before the second pony could be stopped, he also shared the fate of the leader. Horror on horror! he had dragged Ai Brass with him, and together they went plunging over the precipice. Mrs. Missionary, beside herself in grief at the awful fate of Ai Brass, sprang toward the ledge, but Dr. Missionary was there before her. " Wait," he said, as the sounds of the crashing could still be heard. Then all was still. She hid her face in her hands, weeping softly, while the others approached carefully to the edge of the ledge to see the fate of Ai Brass and the ponies. A shout of joy from

Ai Ta brought her to look down over the ledge, and there, thirty feet below on a jutting ledge, was Ai Brass, safe and sound. A little lower down were the pack ponies, quietly eating grass as if nothing unusual had happened. But the contents of those baskets! "Well," as Dr. Missionary said, "it would make a dog laugh to look at them." Ai Brass explained his escape, together with the ponies, in a unique way. He was talking confidentially with his mistress. "You see, it was this way," he said. "Every time I struck, the pony was right under me, and the basket was under the pony when he struck, so you see how the Lord provided for us. As I bounced from ledge to ledge, the pony was right there for me to land on." His explanation was almost too much for his mistress, who rose hastily and went to count how many ledges were between the top and where Ai Brass finally landed. "Four," she counted; "and the pony got there ahead each time," she murmured.

One morning the walls of the city where they were to make their future rose up before them. They were just entering the gates, with as much dignity as weary, dusty travelers could muster, when a spick-and-span dogcart came to meet them. In the cart was a white man, and behold! both his face and coat were clean. "We are hardly fit to get into this rig," protested the travelers. "We are so dusty and dirty." "Yes, you are a little dusty," he said with a merry twinkle in his eye. "We shall have to ask you to improve your appearance if you are to live with us here on the rim. Never look this way again," he continued. When Mrs. Missionary looked in the glass later on she prayed fervently that she might never look that way again. She was as brown as a berry, and brown never was becoming to her, she thought.

It was a happy day for all the weary travelers. Even Brother Nan was pleased. Not that he mentioned it, but he sat down with an unmistakable air of relief, because he did not have to get up and move on presently. When Ai Ta, in all his borrowed finery, came to make his farewell visit, Mrs. Missionary

saw him go with genuine regret. The K.C.F. waxed fat in their new home and have become things of beauty and a great joy to their owners.

IV

Billigamanna: The Jumbo of Thailand

While there are many automobiles in Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, the day when they will supersede the elephant in the jungle is not yet at hand. There the elephant is still the tractor, truck, and family limousine. Are the huge teak logs, in the jungle, to be moved? He becomes the tractor, and drags them down to the streams. He is also the truck, carrying the heavy loads on his back. But when royalty comes to town, he becomes the family limousine, and a very grand one in his gold and silver howdah and his exquisite gold and silver trappings which cover his body. With what decorum he walks through the streets of the city, quite oblivious to the cheering crowds. Yes, truly the elephant has lost some of his prestige in the metropolis, but in the jungle he is still at a premium. In spite of all his apparent dignity on state occasions, the elephant after all is a bit of a wag, insidiously faking bits of banana leaves from the yards along the streets as he passes, and shamelessly helping himself at the little market stalls. The tinkle of his little bell in the distance is the sign for the market woman to put the bananas and sugar cane out of sight. He is bitterly denounced by his mahout, when he marauds the market stalls, but when he gravely hands part of the spoil up to the protesting member, behind his ears, there is a peaceful silence.

The Thai people are very fond and very proud of their elephants, in which, because of their very keen sense of humor, they take a whimsical and unbounded delight. There are

sometimes exceptions to this, however. Formerly, before he became a business commodity in the teak forest, the elephant was the family pet and a generally useful member. His duties were various and ranged from playing nursemaid to taking the family on a once-in-a-lifetime trip to another province. Many are the stories treasured and told of his wonderful sagacity, his love to friends and bitter revenge on enemies. That elephants "never forget a friend or forgive an enemy" is certainly very true.

In spite of their great size and marvelous strength, elephants are in reality delicate animals in vital resistance to disease, often dying very quickly from a seemingly small ailment. It is not at all an uncommon sight in passing through the jungles to come upon an elephant's carcass by the wayside. On inquiry, one often finds that the elephant was ill only a very short time. Elephants fall heir to many diseases, but are especially prone to insanity. In former days, when elephants were seldom used in the jungle and were kept near the villages, many were the times that the people were compelled to flee for their lives, while some elephant which had run amok razed the houses to the ground. An elephant may be a most trustworthy animal for many years, and then one day suddenly run amok. Of course there is sometimes an immediate cause, as in the case of the hero of our story, for years a peaceful decoy elephant by the honorable name of Billigamanna. He not only had the distinction of being the largest elephant in his district but the most reliable as well. Many were the kraals that he had presided over. Inside the huge stockade his vociferous voice had decoyed hundreds of wild comrades into captivity, and then punished them into submission. "Billie" could always be relied on to do his part, from trumpeting lustily to knocking flat the most obstinate wild elephant. However he was the most docile of elephants, and childishly devoted to his mahout. Then one day, quite without any warning, he went wildly insane following a kraal in which he may

have been injured. He was in a fevered frenzy, and instantly killed his beloved friend, his mahout. Not one of the elephants could be induced to try to subdue him, and after injuring several people he made off to the jungle. From that time on for two days, Billigamanna was a menace to the district, doing enormous damage to property while the people went around in peril of their lives. There was no telling where he would appear next or what strange and dreadful thing his frenzy would lead him to do. The elephants were all in stampede and it was impossible to get any of them to go near him.

At last he was seen by the mahouts to come up out of the river and go into a narrow strip of dense jungle. After much consultation, they decided to take a cow elephant and tether her as near as possible to the spot, and so entice Billie into the open and keep him in one vicinity. However, the mahouts did not know, or at the time failed to recall, that this strip of jungle was on a piece of land belonging to an Englishman who, with his wife and daughter, had recently come to the country. They had built a beautiful bungalow and had transformed their part of the jungle into a little paradise. It had not been an easy matter in the few years they had been there to get their estate into such a flourishing condition, and it was, therefore, with a feeling of intense horror that they heard that Billigamanna was in their vicinity. They well knew what it would mean to their gardens and fruit trees. Hastily they gathered all the firewood available to keep up fires around their bungalow that night. In despair they saw the sun sink in the west and darkness sweep down upon them. There is no twilight in the tropics. The fires were lighted and all the lamps in the house were placed on the verandas. As long as the fires blazed they knew they would be safe from Billie's frenzy.

Half a mile from the home of Mr. and Mrs. Berwin, the owners of the bungalow, was a little village, but this was comparatively safe as the cow elephant was tethered some distance from it. Moreover, the whole village spent the night in gath-

ering firewood and making a mountain of flames between themselves and Billie. But alas! at midnight every piece of wood that was available in the vicinity of the bungalow was burned. Dark despair settled down on the occupants of the bungalow as they saw the smoke screen of fire between them and probable death slowly dying down. Perhaps their feelings can better be imagined than expressed, for they were petrified with terror, expecting every minute to hear a crashing from the jungle which would sound their doom. One faithful servant had stayed with them to help to save their home, so there were four occupants in all. They strained their ears to catch the first approach of Billigamanna. It was impossible to try to escape to the village when his whereabouts was still unknown, so they waited in despair.

There was an ominous silence for about an hour, then, with an earsplitting trumpeting which shook the walls of the bungalow and a terrific crashing of fences, Billie was in the garden, making straight for the house. With trunk uplifted, ears back, his little eyes gleaming, he was prepared for a vicious charge. Mother and daughter clung to each other, softly weeping, expecting the next minute to be their last. Mr. Berwin, concealed behind a screen on the veranda with a rifle, prepared to shoot if the animal attacked the house. Well he knew the danger of further infuriating the animal unless it were a case of life and death. On and on Billie came, and death seemed to draw nearer and nearer as he crashed through the garden, crushing the plants under his feet. Mr. Berwin made ready to shoot when less than four yards from the house the elephant stopped and began prowling around and around the house, madly trumpeting, smashing everything in sight, and pulling up trees and shrubs. The noise was deafening, and with sickening horror they waited for him to begin his attack on the house. Meanwhile, trapped as they were in the house, there was no chance of escape. The elephant's fierce breathing was quite audible between crashes and fierce trumpeting. At the

end of an hour of awful agony for the occupants of the bungalow, Billie had everything in sight demolished to his satisfaction. The house will be next, thought Mr. Berwin, when, to his intense surprise, Billie merely gave the house a close scrutiny and casually strolled off to the plantain garden a little distance from it. It was then decided that it would be better to try to escape to the village if possible, as the elephant would no doubt return later to attack the house. If all went at once, there might be danger of attracting his attention, so Miss Berwin, under the escort of the servant, went first. They made good their escape, but just as Mr. and Mrs. were starting, Billie suddenly returned to the house. He came very near to the bungalow, raising clouds of dust as he stamped and tore up the earth with his huge tusks. Finally, under the cover of this thick dust cloud, Mr. and Mrs. Berwin made their escape to the village. Imagine the joy of the daughter, who had given her parents up as dead when she had seen the elephant return to the house after she and the servant had made good their escape.

At the first faint streak of dawn, or, as the Thai people say in their poetic language, when the first lines of gold appeared in the east gate of heaven, Mr. Berwin hastened to his home. To his great dismay, he found hundreds of fruit trees and pineapples gone, his entire planting for the year wiped out. Fences were demolished, and cattle and buffaloes in the garden, with Billie bathing in a pool at the foot of the garden. It was fortunate that the household had escaped when they did as some footprints within five feet of the front steps showed that Billie would have seen any who remained there and he would probably have charged through the house and killed them all.

For several days Billigamanna, less furious but the terror of the neighborhood still, was at large; then he suddenly disappeared. Later, travelers reported having seen a crowd of wild elephants in the jungle some hundred miles from Billie's home. Among these wild elephants was a huge tusker whose well-groomed coat oddly contrasted with their unkempt, lean bodies.

So without doubt Billie had returned to his native haunts, from which he had been beguiled by a decoy elephant and from which he in turn had beguiled hundreds of his innocent brothers and sisters.

V

As the Jungle Boy Led

One day about two hours before the eye of day fell into the western heavens, I started out for a walk in the jungle. As I passed by a cottage, I called to two of my friends, Happy and Gloria, " Come, go for a walk in the jungle with me." And what do you suppose they said? Well, as you never in the world would guess, I shall have to tell you. " We are working on a puzzle, and do not want to go." Working on a puzzle when one could go for a walk in the jungle! As I passed another cottage, I called, " Come, go for a walk in the jungle." But a voice floated out from behind closed windows and doors, " I am reading a book, and cannot go." Reading a book when one might go for a walk in the jungle! When I reached the house of the jungle boy, there he sat, sharpening his knife. Before I could ask him, he called to me, " Where are you going? " And when I replied, " I am going for a walk in the jungle," almost before I had ceased speaking, he bounded down the path, and very gallantly offered his escort for the trip to the jungle.

I very politely suggested that he walk ahead, in case we should meet a bear or any other interesting animal. He might understand how to greet him better than I could. At this, he gave me a very sweet smile and at once led me to the jungle path. As we began to climb the mountain side, he pointed out to me the top of a huge tree on which some exquisite orchids were blooming. These orchids, he explained, were called

egg orchids, because they had the deep yellow of the yolk of an egg. As we passed on, he pointed out another bunch of orchids, which he said had a most delicate odor. He sniffed at them with great appreciation, and then explained to me that they were too high up for us to get the delicate odor.

As we reached the top of the mountain and started over the other side, he said, "Now we shall see the bear's nest." And when I stood stockstill and refused to go on, he explained that the bear had long since departed and left behind only his nest. He told how the bear had come there and stayed for several days, while he ate the fruit on the trees. This bear was an exceedingly greedy fellow and ate all day, and used his little bed only to sleep in at night. When I commented that the bed was small and perhaps the bear would be in danger of falling out of it, he explained, "There was no danger at all of that, because the bear hung on with his forefeet while he was asleep." He said it was most interesting to watch this bear eat because he sat down on the branch just like a person, holding on with his lower limbs. He held the fruit in his front paws and ate exactly "like I do." When he finished all the fruit on one tree, he moved on to another, but he always came back to sleep in his little bed. The bear was too lazy to make another bed. "When we came to look at him he used to talk to us, and his voice sounded just like our voices when we are talking very low in our throats. And though we came often to look at him, he did not seem very friendly. At last when the fruit was all gone, we lost our bear, and we were sorry too because we liked him, even though he did not care for us. However, we think that next year when the fruit is ripe again, he will again come back to his nice little bed, which is still in the tree." That finished the bear story, and we were now at the foot of the mountain.

Then began the story of the elephants who ran away from home to play in the jungle. Now these elephants had a perfectly good home and owners who loved them. However, when the first chance came, they ran off to see the jungle. I said to

the jungle boy, " The elephants must have made a great noise as they roamed through the jungle, and frightened you? " But he laughed and said, " Oh, no, the elephant is a very clever animal. These elephants did not want their owners to find them, so they walked about very carefully and did not make any noise at all. You see, on the mountain there are all sorts of good things for the elephants to eat that they do not get down in the valley. So they wanted to stay as long as possible. If we had not seen them, we would not have known that they were there." Then he pointed out some of the delicate food that the elephants were eating. One variety, especially, was covered with thorns. And when I exclaimed at the sharpness of these thorns, he said: " No these thorns do not trouble them at all; they are able to chew them up." All along the path there were the prints of their huge feet, trees and shrubs that they had torn down with their trunks, and a bridge over which they had walked also broken down — all of which is an evidence of their great strength. But alas! one day their owners appeared. And though they stood still as mice while the owners approached, they could not hide their huge forms, and so, sadly, they departed for their homes. " Here," said the boy, " is the little path they went down to go home." " Don't you imagine they shed a lot of tears? " I asked him. " Well," he replied, " they all trumpeted as the owners drove them along and perhaps that is their way of shedding tears." That ended the elephant story.

We soon came to a castoff skin of a snake. " Here," said the jungle boy, " is a place where a large snake lives. We often see his castoff skin, and sometimes we even see the snake himself. But we do not trouble him, and so he does not trouble us. He is a huge snake and greatly to be feared, and would fight us fiercely if we attacked him." All this time, as we had been passing along over across the ravine, the gibbons were calling. " Don't you love the gibbons? " said the jungle boy to me. In my answer to him, I said, " I love them at a good dis-

tance." And he replied: " Oh, they would not do anything to you. They are almost like we are; they go visiting in the forest and take all the children along, and you never saw anything so cute as the babies are." It was very evident that everything in the forest was just like a brother to this little jungle boy. He knew the voices of all of them, he knew what they ate, he knew what their cries meant, and he could sympathize with them all and love them all. The deep call of the barking deer sounded high up in the mountain, and he looked up, ecstasy in his face. He drew a deep breath and said, " Listen, the deer is calling! " And one could see readily that he found a deep response in his own jungle heart. As we returned home, we paused by the clear mountain spring and watched the water tumbling over the stones. Its sweet musical voice sang to him the song of the jungle, in which he had deep content. We parted at the foot of the mountain, and he went up the incline to his home. I could still hear him chanting a little paean of praise.

The jungle boy and I have been great pals for many years. Our hearts were knit together from the time when, on one Sabbath as I acted as preacher, he insisted on sitting on my lap while the sermon was being given. Such are the ties of friendship which bind us mortals together.

VI

An Escape from the Spirits

To try to comprehend spirit worship in Thailand is exasperating to us who are foreign-born. Not so to the Thai people, with whom it is as natural as the air they breathe. " How do the children learn *not* to do all these things which would bring down wrath of the spirits on their poor little heads? " we often

ask. " One does not need to learn what one already knows," was the very true answer once given. It would seem that, to a degree, knowledge of spirit worship is born in them. Through childhood they cower in wretched fear, not knowing when or where some spirit may " bite their heads."

It came about that some spirit was angry with Boa Keo and, inviting two friends to join him, he proceeded to make her life a misery to herself and to the whole village where she lived.

One day Boa Keo had gone out to the forest to find the buffalo, ever a pestilent animal, which is never in sight when wanted and always in sight when not needed. While she was out on this errand, the three spirits overcame her, and when her husband returned to his cottage that evening, he found her crouched back in one corner of the inside room. Her hair was streaming down her back, her once beautiful dark eyes were wild with terror, and she began to scream as her husband approached: " See, see the spirits! Don't you hear them? They are on both sides of me and behind me," and she crouched back again into the corner. Attracted by the young wife's screams and the crying of her two frightened children, the neighbors invited themselves in. " Alas, alas, she has offended some spirit! " they said, and solemnly shook their heads and departed, fearing that they too might incur the wrath of the dreadful ones.

It was a fearful time in the little cottage that night. Boa Keo slept only to waken, crying that spirits were on both sides of her and over her head. She pleaded with her husband to protect her, while he, poor fellow, overcome with fear, was doubtless of small comfort. Such was the beginning, and from that time on, by spells, she would run screaming through the village streets, tear up into some house, and, settling herself, relate marvelous tales, interspersed with cries of terror and the inevitable question as to whether they could hear the three spirits which everywhere accompanied her. The villagers were none too well pleased to have her thus come into their houses, dis-

turbing their own spirits, and they never would have tolerated it except that all the families were kindred in that village. Not a few pitied the poor victim, but they could do nothing to help her. Of course the spirit doctors had been consulted, and they recommended all kinds of offerings, but all was of no avail. The spirits had " strength truly " was the unanimous opinion. Sometimes in the middle of the darkest nights they would drive Boa Keo from the house, and she would run screaming into the rice field or out into the forest, while her poor husband must needs follow after. If she pounded rice, the spirits stood beside her; when she carried water, they were still by her side. She would say to her neighbors: " Listen to these spirits! Do you not hear them? " Small wonder that her neighbors began to avoid her! So, finally, the spirits drove the persecuted woman to cast about for a refuge greater than could be offered her inside her own circle.

There were just two women in that village who knew of a Refuge which was sure and certain, and they invited Boa Keo to try this Refuge. The more she listened to their words, the more she believed them, and when the " teachers " arrived on their usual visit, they found her fully ready to take the stand of a believer in the true God. Strange to say, her relatives not only did not object but gave her a shove in that direction. They met in her house for the service which the teachers held. The Spirit of God came in great power. The look of fear and terror left those beautiful eyes, and a great peace filled them. Off came the old spirit charms and under the house they were thrown. " You will never need them again," said the voice of the teacher and, even as he said, she has not needed them again.

" We have never seen anything like this before," the villagers were saying. " Buddhism has no power over the spirits," said others; and still others said: " The Jesus religion is the true one. Come to us often that we may all believe."

Part Eight

Glimpses of Personality

When a missionary begins to study personalities, and looks at emotional trends, behavior tendencies, social traits, and magnetic qualities in the people around him, he sets himself a lifelong task. He will some day arise from his task with a few truths which he has deduced, only to realize the vast area as yet untouched. Then when he begins to share this with his home church, he will be aware of the dimness of his vision and the feebleness of his pen to make visible the real personality, be his intentions ever so loving, so prudent, and so delicate.

The personalities pictured here I hope are clear; they were drawn close at hand and are meant to show the beauty and grace and charm of a people for whom is felt the deepest admiration. I have presented the simple characters, for is it not true that the great are always simple? And what possibilities of fortitude, faithfulness, and religious fervor are in these personalities so simple and so true! The Lord does indeed have his prophets and his saints in Thailand!

I

The Most Fascinating Woman of the Orient

What is the Lao woman's position in her home? The Lao woman is the head of her house. Here she is the monarch of her little kingdom. She is the banker of her household, and not anything can be bought or sold without her consent. Her husband cannot retain so much as a penny, but must give it all to her and ask her for whatever he needs for his personal use.

The Lao woman dwells in a land of radiant beauty. Her social position is high in comparison with that of other Oriental women. She is the head of her household.

The Lao woman is characterized by a peculiar buoyancy of spirit. She is animated in conversation, with a ready fund of wit and humor in small talk. She might, at times, almost be called frivolous if it were not for her saving quality of dignity, which always characterizes her even in her most joyful mood. She can relate the simplest happening, embellish it, put in a few appropriate gestures, and her audience listens with delight, even though they may have heard her tell the story dozens of times before. Her lovely musical voice ripples along, rising and falling in soft cadence, her little delicate hands gesturing in the most unexpected ways. Her eyes flash; her expression, now happy, now gay, always shows a dignified calmness.

Some of the women are wondrously beautiful, like the beautiful, delicate orchids in the heart of the jungle reminding one of those superlatively beautiful creatures one reads about in fairy tales. It is rare indeed to find a woman who is really homely or could be called homely. Then when one has decided that here at last is a really homely Lao woman, she flashes one of those radiant smiles and you are not so sure. The Lao woman is small, delicate in build, perfect in poise, and walks

along with a quick, swinging, graceful step. She looks out on her little world with a calm, sad, reposeful expression, just the way a dignified Lao woman is trained to look. For the Lao woman is a woman of culture, always perfectly at ease no matter what the circumstances are. When you meet her you know you are in the presence of a woman whose training in manners and etiquette has been perfect in its form. When she is passing along the street, or waiting for me in my reception room, the Lao woman casts her features into a set expression as if she had on a mask. She has an extraordinary knowledge of human nature and an amazing power in the analysis of character.

In giving a picture of the life of the Lao woman, we shall begin at that most interesting age, the time of courtship, for the Lao young people settle their own love affairs. At the age of seventeen or eighteen, the Lao maiden begins to consider herself a woman and to be especially careful of her appearance. She decks herself out as gaily as possible. In the early evening these little women may be seen, in groups, making garlands of flowers for their hair of exquisite little white buds, which later will blossom out on their pretty heads sending out the most delicate perfume.

About nine o'clock the hands of the maiden may be busy with her spinning, but her ears are listening for the voice of her lover, her hero. It is a moonlight night, for no lover who cares to keep his head intact would venture out at any other time. The moon shines with all the beautiful radiance of the tropics; through the slowly swaying bamboo, like huge feathers, back and forth its rays are spun like sprays of silver. The scene is perfect. Juliet is ready. Her crown of buds is opening, perfuming the air. A spray of yellow orchids hangs coyly over one ear. Her lovely, delicate face is flushed, and she sparkles with all the ornaments the family possesses. She is a fair sight as she sits at her spinning wheel. Then in the distance a falsetto voice is singing: the lover approaches with his best boy friend, for no Lao Romeo ever goes courting alone.

The boy friend plays a few gay measures on his silver-toned mandolin, and when he stops Romeo improvises a little song to fit exactly the music just played.

"But why not sing as you play?" I once asked a Romeo.

"Because we don't," he replied. As he nears the home of his lady love, he sings of her charms in a most melting way. Her eyes are like the stars. Her voice is low and musical like the water falling in the mountain brook. Her hair is as fragrant as the night-blooming jasmine. And she is as sweet as sugar cane. But the spinner continues to spin until at last the lover and his friend spring up the steps and take their places in the family sitting room, which is the wide veranda. The family are present, and some of the neighbors too perhaps. Now if the parents approve of this young man, they will presently disappear inside the house, and the neighbors will fade away one by one, leaving the three young people alone. But if they do not approve, they all sit there and freeze him out. In the end, however, it must be as the lovers say. They will not tolerate any real interference in their love affairs, and there is a famous saying in that land: "Who can forbid the course of true love?" And no one may do so.

When the parents retire inside the house, the spinner puts away her cotton yarn, but continues to spin. Now she is spinning stories and the events of the countryside or little startling experiences in her own life, and as she spins Romeo watches and decides either to propose or not. His best boy friend, his squire, is not idle either; he makes, so to speak, a typewritten copy of the remarks of Romeo in his brain. His principal occupation, however, is not to become so infatuated with Juliet himself that he forgets whether Romeo proposes or not, or gets near enough to touch her hand. If she can prove that, he marries her or pays for a breach of promise case. It has been known to happen, but rarely, that the squire decided to marry Juliet himself. Such conduct, however, is bad etiquette and something which must be lived down.

The marriage of a Lao maiden is the one great event in her life. She is then the center of attraction in her village. All come to wish her much joy, but outside of this no gifts are given. The marriage ceremony is very simple. The young man comes to live in his wife's home and is made a member of her family by an offering placed on the spirit shelf. The spirit is begged to care for him as a member of the family. The ceremony is now over. The young couple must make their home with the wife's parents for two years. They may then establish a home of their own if there are other sisters in the family. If any woman is so fortunate as to be the only daughter, or the youngest daughter, she inherits the home place. Thus for centuries the family has perpetuated its line through the feminine side of the house.

The Lao woman is radiantly happy when she welcomes her first child. Little children are always welcome in Thailand, but their first reception is rather amazing. As soon as the little child has arrived, he is taken to the top of the stairs and is offered to the spirits, because the people say they cannot be sure whether this is a real child or some evil spirit from the lower world. This is the test: The child is placed, not too gently, on the hard floor, and a voice calls out: " If this is an evil spirit from the lower world, let the keeper take him at once. If not, do not come at this time to bother him." What must be the agony of these young mothers while this test is being made! If the child dies at birth, he is supposed to have been a spirit.

If the first child is a boy, the mother's joy and pride seem a little greater, but girls are welcome too. After the first child is born, a young wife is always addressed by her husband as the mother of this child. If the child is called " Jewel-of-the-House," he always addresses her as " Mother of Jewel-of-the-House." It is a good cause for divorce if he should fail to observe this custom. If the first child is born in the house of the grandparents, custom requires that when the young parents go into their own home this child must be given to the grand-

parents. One often sees grandparents quite contentedly raising a second family of children. These children always address their father and mother as brother and sister.

The Lao woman leads an orderly life: certain seasons to do certain things, certain times to perform her household duties. When one pauses to remember that these Lao women have been doing these same things and in these particular ways, with absolutely no change, for centuries, the life of a Lao woman is really impressive.

The Lao woman begins the daily round in her household before the eye of day appears. As the first faint tints of gold appear in the east gate of heaven, she rises and dresses and goes at once to the water jar. Taking a coconut dipper full of water in her right hand and pouring water on her left, she washes her face vigorously. Then she cleans her teeth. If it is the hot season, she takes a full bath, though ordinarily the evening, after the work is done, is bath time. Her toilet is now complete, for her hair is in as good condition as when she went to bed. She has slept on a hard pillow — a great timesaver, but not much for comfort. She next goes into her kitchen and rakes out the coals of fire — for the fire never goes out in a Lao kitchen from one generation to another — and makes the fire. She drains the water from the rice which has been soaking all night. The rice that the Lao woman prepares for her household is the glutinous rice and must be steamed, not boiled. Her stove is simply a square box filled with ashes, and her pots and kettles are set on tripods over the fire. When the rice steamer begins to sing its gay little song, like our beloved teakettle, she replenishes her fire and goes out into her garden to gather vegetables to make the curries. These she cuts into small bits and boils them, adding a little garlic, red peppers very generously, a bit of pickled fish, and curry powders which she prepares herself. Her curries give off a most delicious odor and cannot be resisted any more than we can resist the delicious aroma of good coffee as it floats on the breeze.

By this time the rice is steamed. She turns it from the steamer onto a tray of woven bamboo and kneads it as we knead bread. Then it is put into small baskets and is ready to be served. The curries are dished up in small bowls and put on a table about ten inches high. The mother then calls, "The rice is ready," and the family gather around the little table. Two people have one rice basket between them, the father and mother always sharing one.

Now we shall do a very impolite thing and watch a Lao family at their meal. Each one takes a handful of rice, rolls it into a long piece, then dips it into the curry and pops it into his mouth. Doubtless there are many rules of etiquette which they observe, but certainly keeping their mouths closed in chewing is not one of them. But they are shocked at our manners too, especially the way we drink when eating. A Lao woman will sit with great composure and see her child nearly choke to death, but that would be a mild matter to seeing him take a drink while eating. However, when the meal is over she lines up her children and compels each one to drink a huge coconut dipper of water. The meal over, the rice baskets are very carefully hung up, as what is left is sufficient for dinner and supper. The curry dishes are washed but not dried; the table is hung up; the floor is swept, a crack being left for that purpose when the house was built. Under this crack Towser has been patiently waiting for some time, so that work is soon finished.

The family linger for a little social chat as it is not considered polite to talk while eating. The mother now brings out a small black jar which contains fermented tea leaves. Each person is given a small roll of these, after she has put in a little coarse salt. No matter how many servants a Lao woman has she will always do this herself. Very pretty and graceful she looks with her family around her. It is one of the finer touches, like pouring the after-dinner coffee. She hands it to her husband first, and he bows and thanks her; then to the oldest child,

down to the youngest, and then to the servants. Now each one, including the baby, is given a cigarette. The mother has prepared these by rolling the tobacco in a piece of a banana leaf. A Lao man is very indignant if his wife fails to have these cigarettes prepared for him. The omission is quite like a missing button in this land, it seems.

The rest of the day the Lao woman divides her time in her garden or in marketing the fruit and vegetables or in weaving at her loom or in sewing for her household, as she still spins, weaves, and dyes most of the garments her family wear. The afternoon must be given over to pounding or hulling the rice. As the eye of day is about to fall into the west gate of heaven, she goes to the village well to carry water to fill the huge water jars. The test of a good housekeeper is well-filled water jars. Here she pauses for a bit of gossip at the well, but the Lao woman is rigidly careful of her reputation. Last of all comes the evening meal, which is eaten as late as eight or nine o'clock in the outvillage during the busy season.

In America we speak of housekeeping as women's work, but because the actual housekeeping in a Lao home is on such lines of beautiful simplicity, the women never speak of housekeeping as their work but always of " carrying the water and pounding the rice." This is truly women's work, because in some households the man may do most of the cooking quite cheerfully; in any case every Lao man knows how to cook, but he would be highly indignant if he had to pound the rice and carry the water.

The reason a Lao woman is so careful of her reputation is that the average Lao man is a frightfully jealous creature. When he is courting he sings of the charms of his sweetheart out where everyone can hear, but once he is married he wants those same charms for himself alone. The young wife no longer decks herself with garlands as she goes to the well lest her jealous husband think she is trying to win some other man by her charms. After a Lao woman is married, as a rule she

no longer endeavors to make herself attractive beyond her natural charm; if peradventure she does, it generally leads to a family quarrel with an angry, jealous husband. There is only one class of women who can still wear lovely adornments of maidenhood after marriage — our Christian women. Their husbands have perfect confidence in them.

That we may understand the Lao woman, we shall now look at a few of the customs that she so rigidly adheres to from the first days of her training. When a Lao woman says, " It is the custom," she indicates a stone wall that none may penetrate. As a tiny child, she is taught to sit with her feet and limbs neatly folded up under her, the soles of her feet carefully covered by her skirt. She is taught never to reach above anyone's head and never to pass anyone with her head higher than his. She must beg pardon before mentioning any part of her body, as foot or hand. She is taught the proper way to get up, to sit down, to enter, and to go out. This includes how to address her hostess in visiting, the proper way to take leave, and so forth.

According to custom, if a Lao woman has an occasion to accompany her husband any place, she must walk three steps behind him. If she walks either nearer or farther away, she clearly indicates to all who may behold that she does not have the proper respect for his honorable self. A Lao man feels very important as he walks ahead of his wife. It is one of the rare occasions when he gets to assert himself.

The Lao women are much given to hospitality, and there are many customs for them to observe. It is their duty to see that the betel boxes are filled; that there are plenty of cigarettes; that there is cool, fresh water in the jars. According to custom, in receiving guests the host sits in the center of the veranda and his wife sits behind him, near the door leading into the inner room. On the days when guests are present he is apt to monopolize the conversation. At times he grows quite bombastic, to impress his audience and his wife in particular.

The wife, who has a keener sense of humor than he, has been known to cast glances of amusement in my direction on more than one occasion when the good man was holding forth.

There are many other peculiar customs which the Lao woman observes with great precision. One is that she never goes anywhere alone. All the women of a village go to market together, and one often meets a line of twenty or thirty women going along the country roads with their graceful little swinging trot, the oldest or most honorable woman ahead. They are very careful about precedence. All go together because their presence is mutually helpful in case of question as to where they have been, thereby preventing gossip.

Other customs are not so easy to account for, and an outsider might live there for years and never learn of them. For instance, no man will ever consent to carry a woman's skirt. One often sees a man and his wife going on a trip to another province. He quite cheerfully carries all the heavy luggage while milady is carrying one little bundle tied on the end of her umbrella. These are her skirts. Her husband would not carry them under any circumstance. I asked a woman the why of this one day and she said, " It is custom."

" But why is it the custom? " I asked.

" Why, custom is custom," she said.

The Lao woman does not go into the analysis of custom and she does not approve of others' doing it either. If a Lao woman goes to visit in a distant village, even to the home of a relative, she must, according to custom, take along a little package of steamed rice. This is to show that she has plenty of rice at home. She often carries it there and back, although when she started she knew she would not need it. No Lao man, however, observes this custom. As usual, I learned of it only after expressing amazement at my Bible women when we went to hold services on Sunday. Going to the home of a Christian of means, they would constantly bring out their little bundles of rice. One day I said to the Bible women, " I should think your

hostess would have been shocked today when you produced your rice."

"Shocked?" they exclaimed. "She would have been shocked if we had not."

"But you did not eat it," I argued.

"Why, we did not expect to eat it. It's custom."

I knew it would avail nothing to argue about custom. Anyhow the Bible women had closed the argument with that finality so provoking in an Oriental.

With all the liberty and power that the Lao woman has gained for herself, there is one place where the Lao man has succeeded in keeping her in the background. The Lao woman has absolutely no part in the temple worship other than to sit and listen to something which she knows almost nothing of. She has plenty to do in preparing the gifts and furnishing the money to keep up the temple. If it were not for the energy of the Lao women, some temples would be without support. (Did you ever hear of anything like that before?) A priest must never look at a woman and has a fan to put in front of his face as he passes along the street to keep him from seeing her. But the Lao priest either forgets his fan or, if he has it along, he forgets to use it.

Occasionally one finds a Lao woman whose devotion to her religion is most praiseworthy and whose understanding is fair, but she is rare indeed. In a temple service where the women go to worship, the sacred books are read in a singsong tone by some priest. They are filled with Pali, which very few of the most learned priests understand, and no explanations are made. No man ever explains anything to a woman. A very devoted woman used to pass our compound frequently on her way to the temple. One day, meeting her at the gate, I said, "Aunt Crystal, where have you been?" This was more a polite greeting than a question as she had her temple bowl with her. She answered in the polite words of the older generation, "To the temple, princess."

"What book was read there today?"

"I wonder which one it was," she answered.

"Well, what did it teach?"

"I wonder what it did teach," she answered. "The ears of your mother are not very good." She, like the rest, had got nothing. So the devotion of the Lao woman is apt to be blind devotion, a seeking and groping for she knows not what. Such women find their joy and understanding in the religion of our Saviour, who said to the poor afflicted woman, "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

In the past no Lao woman was ever allowed to learn to read. It is marvelous to think that, with all the rights a Lao woman gained, she did not gain the right to learn to read. It was thought that there was something very unnatural about a woman who wanted to learn to read. Occasionally one did learn to read, but these strong-minded ladies were blamed for all the misfortunes that befell their families and they were about as popular as the plague.

We have now a new generation of Lao women. These are the graduates of the Christian high schools and normal school. Fortunately these women have retained all the grace and charm of their lovely mothers and have added to that the culture of a modern education.

II

The Adopted Daughter

This is a beautiful country, with its proud mountain ranges and its great sweeps of rice plains and, best of all, its women. When the latter come under the refining influence of the Christian religion, they are a fair sight, and all the joys of the homeland are not to be compared to that of winning them for Christ.

Auntie Green is such a women; though a Christian only about two years, she is devoted and an inspiration to me. The beauty of it is that there are many just like her; she is one of a class of our Lao women.

Auntie Green has just been in giving me an account of her adopted child. She is not much of a child in point of experience, having already had a husband, but she will not have another until she is wiser, says Auntie Green, with an emphatic toss of her little head.

When this poor girl was a little child, her parents died, leaving her to a distant relative, and she has never known what it is to be loved until now. " Well, it is not easy to teach anyone who has so much to learn as Nang, and that is the truth," Auntie Green reports, and of course it is not easy to take one of these outvillage women and make her over into the sweet, gentle person that Christian culture produces.

When Nang first came to her new home, she was sent one morning to market with a basket over her shoulder, and with the first money she ever had to spend. She had been well instructed what to get, but she returned with large rice cakes.

" And where are the vegetables for the curries? " asked Auntie Green excitedly.

" Oh, I did not get any. These cakes are so much better."

So the next morning Auntie Green went to market herself, leaving Nang to steam the rice. But it was a cold morning, far too cold to get up early, so the rice was not steamed until late. " What difference does it make? " said Nang.

In one way Nang has proved an exception to the average outvillage woman who protests against the conventional number of garments. She not only did not object, but insisted on wearing all that she had at once, Sunday clothes on the outside. Once properly arrayed for church, the next thing to teach her was the " fitting place " for her to sit. Nang insisted on sitting up in front, next to the " Mother Teachers," the place reserved by custom for the learned women, such as the elders' wives.

"Why do you sit there?" asked Auntie Green, full of indignation. "It is not fitting, seeing you cannot even read."

"If it is not fitting I will not do it any more," was the meek reply, but the next Sunday Nang forgot and was beaming in her old place.

Auntie Green's training seems to be most thorough. Sometimes, because of the family work, one member must eat alone. One day when Nang was thus engaged on the veranda, I overheard this conversation:

"Nang, did you ask the blessing before you started to eat?" called Auntie Green from somewhere within the house. "Oh, no, I forgot; I will ask it right away," a repentant voice replied.

"Why, you are nearly finished! Instead of asking a blessing, you would better pray that you may not be so forgetful next time."

Again at night Auntie inquires, "Have you said your prayers?" after Nang has rolled up snugly in her blanket. If not, out Nang must come.

I have sometimes thought Auntie Green a bit too strenuous in her training of this child; but the love Nang has for her is very touching, seeing that she has lived here not quite a year. Nang says that Auntie Green is the only mother she ever had, and that she is herself a new person since coming to her new home. It is a beautiful thing to see this woman who has partaken of the joys of our Christian religion so eager to pass them on to one less fortunate.

III

Character Sketches of Lao Women

Pe Chi is a Muang Prae woman of wonderful energy and no mean business ability. One day, in a neighboring village buy-

ing and selling, she came upon a group of people seated around a missionary. " I will just turn aside now," thought Pe Chi, " to see what it is that the white stranger is teaching my neighbors. The wisdom from the outside world is no doubt very wonderful, and it is fitting that we should all learn." Having thus made peace with herself for neglecting business, she joined the group. As she listened to the beautiful story of redemption, her little narrow heart, which hitherto had been given only to exceedingly earthly things, seemed to open up and grasp the truth. It was not until the eye of day was about to fall behind the mountain, that Pe Chi hastily took up her baskets of unsold goods and, joining her companions, wended her way homeward. She knew she could never be the same woman again, for she had experienced that greatest of all changes, the soul's awakening.

When the first day of the week came, Pe Chi remembered that the white stranger had said it was the Lord's Day and must be kept holy. She had no conception of what was meant by keeping a day holy, so she bribed her sister-in-law to escort her to the city church that she might see. Sister-in-law protested; she was not interested in keeping any day holy, when she could just as well be making money in her market stall. But ironclad custom forbade a Lao woman to go alone on such a trip, and so, in order to get her escort, Pe Chi was obliged to pay an exorbitant price. At last they set off, bright and early, on Sunday morning, for they had ten miles to walk before they reached the city. They found the service new and amazing: perfect order, beautiful music, a peaceful atmosphere, earnest prayers of the elders, the discourse of the minister. The session meeting after service was rudely interrupted by a shrill, excited voice saying, " I am going to enter your religion." Six pairs of reproachful eyes were turned upon Pe Chi. Nan Chi, the ruling elder, was first to recover from his surprise.

" There are requirements not a few," said he, " for one who would enter this religion."

" Tell me what they are," said Pe Chi in her businesslike way. " I will do them every one."

True to her word, nothing was too difficult; even the twenty miles she must walk every Sunday did not daunt her. Consternation spread through the village when they learned that Pe Chi had entered the new religion. No one dared to say much, for her husband was headman and his wife commanded respect. She was not content that she herself should be saved; she was in earnest that all her family, including the sister-in-law who had been her unwilling escort, should become Christians.

On the first tour that Dr. Crooks and I took, we were guests of Pe Chi for a week. Her zeal for our comfort, her deep concern for the spiritual welfare of her neighbors, her marvelous influence in getting all the village children to come to sing with us, and her own pleasing personality, made our tour a peculiarly delightful remembrance.

Four years later we again visited Pe Chi's village. We found that she had prospered instead of losing all she had, as some of her neighbors had prophesied when she entered the Jesus religion. A large frame house had replaced the small bamboo cottage. Proudly she greeted us with, " See the new house the Lord has given us! " The neighbors (suspicious of ill luck) had asked where they got the plan for the new house. " We told them," said Pe Chi, " this house came from the Lord; we built it for his glory and for the comfort of our Christian friends when they visit us. We did not need to consult the spirits, either, as to the time or way of building."

Her great desire that all may be saved sometimes leads her to feel, as she says, " smallhearted," because all are not ready, as she was, to accept at once. Sometimes when discouraged, she has heard in the distance a little child, whom she has taught, singing " Jesus Loves Me " and has thought, " O thou of little faith! " So she works and lives and prays, this simplehearted woman, and is bringing in the Kingdom.

Pe Nyought, a Lampang woman, is wife of one of the best evangelists, bear-bitten Noi Wong. He is a remarkable man, and is known far and wide for his zeal as a Christian teacher; his wife, in her own quiet way, is also doing a great work. One might know Pe Nyought a long time and not find her different from other women, unless she is seen in her own home and among her neighbors. When trouble, or "a spirit" (almost synonymous terms in the Lao country) comes into the home, the first thought of the afflicted ones is to send for Pe Nyought. Many a dark night she has hurried to some house in her village and put to flight the troublesome spirit. This she does by earnest prayer and singing of hymns, together with liberal doses of the "heavenly medicine" (quinine). "Pe Nyought always and at all times trusts in her God," the women of her village confided to me. In proof of their statement they told me these little stories, which I fear will lose some of their beauty when turned into prosaic English:

"One day in the rainy season all the women were out in the forest gathering firewood when, suddenly, a terrible storm burst upon us. The heavens called, the lightning flashed, the wind blew, and great trees went crashing down around us. We were all overcome with terror and began to scream and to cry: 'What evil is this come upon us? We shall perish, every one!' But Pe Nyought said: 'Why should we fear? When the heaven calls, it is the voice of God speaking to us. Why should we fear the wind? God is in the rushing tempest. See, the lightning is the finger of God in the heavens. Be quiet, and I will pray to God to protect us.' So we all clung to Pe Nyought, and she prayed and sang. In a little while the storm passed, the eye of day shone upon us, and we all went home in peace, praising the God of Pe Nyought."

"Once when a great prince from the south was coming to visit, every man in our village was called away to work on the road and we women were left alone in our houses. About the fourth hour, we heard a gibbon calling in the forest not far

from the village. Our hearts all fell. We were terrified, for, you know, a gibbon calling that way always foretells some disaster. We got together and ran to Pe Nyought as fast as we could, screaming, ' Pe Nyought, dear! Do you hear the gibbon calling? What is going to happen to us, all alone in the village and the gibbon calling? O Pe Nyought, remember how your God saved us in the storm and pray that we may be saved now! ' ' Do not fear,' said Pe Nyought. ' This gibbon can do us no harm; he is only one of God's creatures. God made him and he is only happy to be alive. He is singing to express his joy, just as I do who am also one of God's creatures. I will sing for you.' So she brought out her hymnbook and sang and prayed until our fears were gone." And they naïvely added, " Just as Pe Nyought said, nothing happened to us that day."

Euie Nang is a Chiengrai woman. At her birth her mother died. Now when one in the Lao country dies in childbirth, the child is always held under suspicion. " Is not this some evil spirit who has escaped the keeper of the lower world? " they ask. If the child dies too, the family is not apt to be consumed by grief, but is rather relieved. Euie Nang was not an accommodating spirit, it seems, but, like the Canaanites, she insisted upon dwelling in the land; so the family had to care for her. It was only natural that they looked upon her with suspicion, and their attitude, combined with Euie Nang's none too sweet disposition, gave her a most unhappy life. She would live with one relative until sickness or misfortune came and, thinking Euie Nang was the cause, he would politely invite her to move on to the next.

So it went until she was married. Her husband proved a worthless brute and left her; her baby died; and she was a destitute outcast when found by one of the Christians and brought home to his family.

When Euie Nang came into that home, she brought all her worldly possessions with her — a scant cloth around her waist

and an exceedingly skimpy skirt; she had never owned a jacket in her life. The modest little wardrobe which was given her could never have brought greater joy to any maiden's heart.

In the genial atmosphere of that Christian home Euie Nang blossomed out like a rose. One could hardly recognize her as that forlorn creature who had come so lately from ruthless persecution. She had become "truly beautiful," as the Christians said.

Her beauty appealed to one young man in particular, who gave himself to writing her epistles in which he described her "as sweet as sugar cane," the limit of sweetness. When love affairs reach such a state as this, the only thing to do is to ring wedding bells. So from that Christian home Euie Nang went forth to establish a Christian home of her own.

Happiness has attended her. She has developed from one oppressed and suspected into a dignified Christian woman. She presides over her home with grace, and her little son is one of the brightest of the coming generation of Christians in Chiengrai.

IV

We Learn to Live

To those who open their hearts to the life about them, the Orient has many good and precious gifts. I never cease to be grateful for the many beautiful lessons that I have seen lived out in the lives of the Lao Christian women whose paths have crossed mine. There are many paths up the hill of life. It is a real accomplishment to go up with quiet peace when the way is rough and rugged. This lesson in patience is a never-failing inspiration to me. But patience to these Lao women is, not a last resort, but an unfailing virtue.

They believe that no wound was ever healed but by degrees, and that all things work around to him who will wait. This philosophy of life they dress up in all kinds of verbal robes and swathe in many poetic forms, until we too learn what a healer patience is. At last we learn how to yield ourselves to its embracing quietness, and how to sit in silence and gaze out into the quiet coolness of the bamboo, on to the deep green of the foot hills, on to the purple tints of the distant mountains, and be still, even though life may be doing its worst for us. In other words, we retire inside our ivory towers. The Lao woman has a real ivory tower. Its name is Patience.

In my first years in Thailand many were the times when I felt that the Lao woman was decorous to dullness. But she is never dull in truth! Later I began to see that she appeared so only because she had been taught and drilled in the lovely art of concealing her emotions. The Lao woman fancies herself greatly in this accomplishment. It is in fact a great one, and I realize that, although I strive for it, I shall only very imperfectly attain it.

But one must have it on occasions. I remember once at the governor's palace when a whole evening had to be spent listening to a famous folk song. I had to try to look pleased, even though I had often heard the wind sing a better song through the keyhole. One of my friends watched me with almost stern solicitude, fearing for my endurance.

But it is when the demon of anger strikes one that the real test comes. *You must not let it speak.* They will never forgive you for that. One may have thoughts that breathe, but never words that burn. They smile with magnanimous tolerance on our wrath blowing off jets of steam, and consider this our most unlovely mood; and they pretend to forgive, which they cannot do.

I remember my first great lesson. Two women met in calling at my home. One of them had tried to "vamp" the other's husband, and the wife was madly jealous. I was frightened

when they met but they were not. The injured woman at once began the conversation. Her voice rang out merrily, her eyes sparkled, she gesticulated and laughed in the most genial way and made all sorts of trivial remarks. She seemed to have her head full of the most entrancing information that day. The second woman, after a long, shrewd appraisal, joined in the general merriment. I must confess that I did not — it needed a soul more akin to their own to see the humor there. But I frequently recall this little comedy when I am tempted to display my wrath, and try to emulate this really marvelous concealing of emotions.

The year before we left Thailand this story was published in a Bangkok paper: A prince and princess were giving a dinner to a party of American tourists. The prince was telling the lady on his right something of the marvelous power of the Thai women in regard to concealing their emotions. Then he added naïvely, " The present generation, however, is not so perfect as the women of old along this line." As he made this remark, he looked guiltily at his lovely princess at the other end of the long table. He saw a look of horror pass over her face for a moment and be suppressed almost as quickly as it appeared. She could not have heard his remarks. In a second or two the same look of horror sat on the prince's face as he saw a waiter place a live, struggling rat in a bamboo splint on the veranda floor. That meant only one thing — a cobra in the room. Suddenly from under a large cupboard behind the princess a cobra darted out for the rat, only to be killed by the waiters, who were very adept at that performance. No one moved from his place, for the utter calmness of the Thai can hypnotize even American tourists.

When the lady on the right awoke again, she heard the prince saying to his lovely princess, " My darling [the Thai prefer " darling " to " dear "], did you know that cobra was in the room? " The tourist felt herself sinking again when the princess said, so calmly, " Not until he crawled over my foot."

The prince spent the rest of the evening apologizing for his aspersions on the present generation of Thai women.

The Lao woman has an extraordinary knowledge of human nature and a marvelous power in the analysis of character. She reads few books but she knows how to read people. It does not take her long to decide who is worth the reading, either. If you live close enough to her, she will in time impart this method to you — though she is very chary of this. Mind reading is one of her most cherished gifts, and when she meets a new person she is more than apt to play Pandora and take a peep. Often the Christian women from the outvillages come to call bringing some strange woman who has begged to come along. While the Christian woman and I exchange bits of news, this strange woman sits and stares at me in a way that one might call rude; but she is only reading — I am her book. By the time the visit is over she, alas, knows who and what I am. This power in the analysis of character is one of the most fascinating lessons that the Lao woman has set for me, and, imperfect as I am in it still, I find it an immense help in the hospital and evangelistic work.

Grace and beauty of manners are natural with the Lao women. No performance with them would be worth the lack of these, no matter how important it might be. This is a hard lesson for anyone who is accustomed to spell duty with a capital D, as most missionaries are prone to do. But the Lao woman always shows in her manner an inestimable grace. Even in menial tasks she walks like a queen. For the Lao women are women of culture, always perfectly at ease, no matter what the circumstances are. When you meet her you know you are in the presence of one to whom the grace and charm of life are of cardinal importance. Yes, the Lao woman has taught me that life can be filled with grace and beauty.

Yet it is true that I sometimes learn what *not* to be from the Lao woman. Her idea of telling what is the truth depends upon the amount of knowledge that she knows you already

have! As a rule, when she has anything at stake, she resolves to die in the last ditch of prevarication, and is extraordinarily convincing in it all. This is, of course, one of her difficult problems when she becomes a Christian.

A Lao woman will talk in the most involved and roundabout way and you could as easily find the source of the Nile as pin the source of some information on her remarks; and this in spite of the fact that that particular piece of information is exactly what she meant for you to get. I once sat in judgment on a case where the guilty one reported that she had said: " Now don't lend your honorable ears to anything I am about to say. Remember, you are not to listen." And she maintained that because of this warning she could not be found guilty of fomenting the rumpus that resulted!

But the best lesson of all that the Lao women have taught me is the one of implicit faith. To them it is God's will, and there is perfect resignation. " It's God's hand. He gave and He takes away," and a smile replaces the tears when the beloved little form is laid to rest. When one of the saints went blind, she said, " Oh, but I can still hear! " Yes, the love and faith of the Lao Christian women is a precious lesson to me, and it has helped me to learn to live.

V

The Country Gentleman of Thailand

There is no need of the slogan " Back to the farm " in North Thailand where nearly every man is a farmer and every single one is a gentleman. Here farming is not merely the chief occupation, but practically the only one. Tucked away in the north of Thailand and surrounded by their purple-tinted mountains the Lao have existed for centuries, a simple, primi-

tive, pastoral people, unheeded and untouched by the outside world. Now the things of the outside world are coming in. The railroad winds in and out the canyons between these hitherto silent mountains. The gentleman farmer of North Thailand regards all this rude intrusion with calm, polite indifference; his rice fields are still his main joy and stay. In this faraway end of the earth the sower does indeed go forth bearing precious seed, for on the result of that seed the very lives of the people depend. Failure means famine, and before the awful specter of famine stalking through the land, everyone bows in terror.

This is a land of queer contradictions, for while every man may be a farmer, not one of these gentleman farmers ever lives on his farm. The whole country is dotted with small villages where the farmers live, the fields surrounding the villages, some near and some far. This was a stern necessity in early days, when the country was infested with tigers and there was also constant warfare between the provinces. In later years these conditions, as a rule, no longer obtain, but in this land of calm afternoons changes never come except by stern compulsion.

When the planting season comes each farmer goes to his field and builds a quaint little green bungalow of the ever useful bamboo, and there he or some trusted member of his family lives until the rice is harvested. After the first great soaking rain, he plows up a small part of his field to plant the seed rice, for all the rice is transplanted here. The rice springs up as if by magic, and while it is growing green and beautiful in its little bed, the country gentleman builds his fences. These fences have been stored up in the trees since the last harvest. If they had been left in the ground, the white ant, a pestilent fellow, would have devoured them and not left so much as a shred to tell the tale. In each field as it is reclaimed from the forest, one sees great tall trees left for this purpose. The fences are all made of bamboo — tied together, with not one nail in their construction.

The rice fields are divided up into small sections about two rods square, with small banks of earth built around to keep the water in when flooded. After several soaking rains have come, and the whole field resembles a thick mud puddle, the farmer gets out his plow. This is the type of plow which has been used for two thousand years and it is primitive in the extreme. It is made all of wood except the plowshare which is iron. This plow is so small and light that it merely scratches the ground, and the fact that wonderful crops can be raised from shallow plowing testifies to the extreme fertility of the soil. Ford tractors are not yet in general use, and perhaps will not be for two thousand years more, according to the present rate of introduction of foreign implements into North Thailand.

The animal that is used with the plow is the water buffalo or carabao — a sort of glorified pig with horns. A lazier beast would be hard to imagine, and his laziness is only exceeded by his utter lack of obedience. For all his huge body, he seems to have amazingly little strength and can work only two hours in the morning and the same length of time in the cool of the evening. When the comparative weakness of the buffalo is considered, one can readily see why the people have always used such a shallow plow. Once an ambitious foreigner got out an American plow and, after much protest from the gentlemen farmers, hitched a buffalo to it. After a round or two the animal fell down, totally collapsed, and ultimately died from the exertion. The primitive plow and the glorified pig may not be the best methods for farming in North Thailand, but at least they have the happy advantage of being adapted to each other.

The harness for the buffalo consists of a wooden yoke which is attached to the plow with native-made rope. The buffalo is supposed to be a most sensitive animal, slow to anger, but very dreadful when his anger is once incurred. The farmer never ceases in his admonitions to his buffalo from the time he sets out to work until he unhitches it to let it go to the forest

to browse. It would be exceedingly bad taste to repeat any of this monologue here, but it sounds most musical at a distance as if he were chanting a paean of praise, whereas exactly the contrary is usually true.

After the field is plowed, it is then gone over with a harrow, which is fitted out with short wooden teeth. The soil is then considered ready for transplanting the rice. When the farmer is ready to plant each field, the sluice gates are torn away and the field flooded; he then calls in his neighbors to help. There is always a general exchange of work both in the planting and in the harvesting season. This is always a gala occasion with plenty of back-breaking hard work to keep the workers from being too frivolous. The whole family takes a part in the work. It is the custom for the workers to go to the field just as the first faint lines of gold are appearing in the east gate of heaven, and before the eye of day rises, they have set to their task. At about nine o'clock they stop for breakfast as the country gentleman of Thailand is pleased to work several hours before he breaks his fast. He is not dependent on a cup of coffee to clear his atmosphere.

Once the rice is transplanted, the farmer must ever be on the alert to see that his field is properly watered from the canals. Most of the good rice country in North Thailand is irrigated land, but there is no general irrigation system. Each district manages as best it can. The land not irrigated is of little value, producing crops only every fifth or sixth year. Often after the rice has been planted in July and August, the rains cease the last of September and the plants dry up in the fields, or if they produce at all, the rice is of a very inferior quality.

The farmer must be ever on his job to keep the buffaloes and the cattle from his fields. The succulent rice plants and the light bamboo fences hold an ever tantalizing invitation before the animals turned loose to browse at will. Also the rice fields must be faithfully weeded, for the weeds in this tropical climate grow amazingly thick and fast. However, the weeding is an

easy matter as the rice is transplanted in clumps and the pulling up of the weeds in no wise injures the plants. A man is in disgrace who allows these pests to grow in his rice.

There are numberless enemies which work on the rice, such as blight, mold, and rust. These are really the most destructive, but there are many minor ones fully as troublesome if not so disastrous in results. The crab is an enemy to the root of the rice, but woe to any crab who appears, for he ends his short career in the curry pot. The frog is another pest which ends in the curry pot. The fact that the farmer is a Buddhist and forbidden to take life does not save these destructive creatures from the curry pot.

When the rice heads out, the beautiful white ricebirds and the ugly black crows are dreaded enemies, coming in great flocks and, if not put to flight soon, working swift destruction to the field. One sees the most wonderful scarecrows here and there in the field, some topped with a dead crow or bird, a gruesome warning which seems to be most effective. Some of the fields have a network of strings suspended several feet from the ground, with tinkling objects attached. A small boy sits and pulls the string all day long. This method is used quite extensively in the south of Thailand and in some parts of the north, but here in the north they quite generally depend on scarecrows or the noise one small boy can make. Really his language alone should put the invaders to flight.

After all is said, however, all the results depend on the spirits, so the people think. The rice once planted, the farmer hopes to have good luck, but he takes no chances on mere luck. He worships all the spirits within his ken — the spirit of the field, the spirit of the water supply, or any neighboring spirit in a bamboo clump. It would be a waste of time to try to explain all the delicate intricacies of spirit worship as it is practiced by the farmer of North Thailand. It is fairly beyond the understanding of the American mind. Perhaps our Anglo-Saxon ancestors could have understood it for, while it is most deplor-

able, it is simply " light drama to high tragedy " compared to druidism.

All the rice that has escaped its several and various enemies is harvested as soon as it begins to turn yellow. The rice, as a general rule, seems to be hard and ready to harvest before it turns yellow. One often sees the farmers reaping quite green-looking fields, but on examination the grain proves to be hard and dry. The cutting is all done with a small hand scythe, the method in vogue twenty centuries ago. After the rice is cut, it is gathered in cocks and then threshed out over the edge of a huge basket. In the reaping season one sees these huge baskets going to the field on the farmers' heads, looking like exaggerated " Merry Widow " hats minus the spring trimmings. After the rice is winnowed with fans and the chaff is out, it is generally carried to the rice bins in baskets, each person carrying two baskets swung on a pole over the shoulder. If the field is very far distant, the rice is taken in bullock carts, which have been introduced generally in the north of Thailand in the last twenty years. If one is very prosperous indeed, he may take his rice in on an elephant, but in recent years the elephants have been taken to work in the teak forests and have now a commercial value, whereas they once expressed one's social standing.

Up to the present time, the Government of Thailand has done very little of any real constructive value to encourage or help the farmers in the north of Thailand. Efficient American engineers have done excellent work in making out valuable irrigation plans for this section of the kingdom, but as yet the Government has not generally taken up the execution of these plans. That the Government will ultimately solve these problems is established beyond question, but in the great multitude of other pressing reforms, this one has been shoved aside. The pity is that it brings privation to a large part of the people of the kingdom and thus greatly affects the general prosperity of the nation.

Part Nine

So This Is the Home Church!

No other persons who go abroad live so intensely the life of their adopted country as does the missionary. He does not go for a limited sojourn but for life. It is his intention to master the language, to learn the customs, and to enter into the very fiber of the psychology of the people of his adoption. Therefore, whether he intends it or not — and certainly few missionaries do — he becomes almost a stranger in his own land. The very language eludes him when he is home on his brief furloughs. He puts into the statements of his fellow countrymen the full content of his own thinking, which has a flavor strongly characteristic of the psychology of his adopted land. Ponder these facts, dear readers, when you are inclined to think, "Certainly these missionaries do have very definite convictions," or, "How could anyone ever come to such a conclusion as that?" Just remember that, as the physical atmosphere becomes saturated with the evening dew to the point of visible precipitation, so the expressions of your missionary, saturated with the ideals and inspiration of a new and vitalized Christianity, come to the point of precipitation with expressions at which your conscience and feelings may be offended. However, no offense is meant. For the missionary there is nothing but the Cause. There is literally nothing else in the world but this, and nothing else on the horizon.

I

Pages from My Furlough Diary

A diary is the most confidential thing one possesses. One can always be frank in a diary, and no one else can take offense. Therefore, dear reader, take notice if you should chance to see yourself herein — and say nothing!

Today we reached Pasadena. " I am sure this cannot be the place! " I said, as we stopped before a beautiful house. It was the " House of Rest," built by Mr. and Mrs. Gamble " for their friends, the missionaries." Shall I ever forget the feeling of restfulness as we went into our beautifully appointed apartment? Every room and every closet told a story of loving thoughtfulness. We were awakened each morning by the songs of the birds singing in the rose garden, and there were roses, roses everywhere. How did Mrs. Gamble discover the secret that missionaries love beautiful things? It is not generally known, is it?

One Day

This has been an exciting day. At breakfast my hostess said to me, " The bus that was to have carried you to W—— has been taken off to be painted."

I fell back in my chair, dumb.

" Since you cannot go, you may as well spend the day visiting me," she continued.

" I am going if I have to walk," I said. " It's to be one of my largest meetings! "

The faces of the earnest young minister and his charming wife who had planned the tour flashed before me, and their parting message: " Remember, Mrs. Missionary, if you need us, telephone; but do try to make your appointment! We've been disappointed so often in this part of the country! "

" I'm going if I have to walk." The journey was fifty miles!

My host, fearing that I was about to have recourse to woman's most ancient weapon, and like most men, ready to do anything to avoid tears, now came to the rescue. " There, now, I'll take you over to the next town and we will see what's to be done."

As we entered the town, the first thing we saw was a freight train. Here was one thing at least that was pointing in the right direction. " Nothing on earth will keep me off that freight train but a written order from the President," I firmly announced.

My hostess hastened to exclaim, " What would the Board ladies say if I let you ride on a freight train? " But two minutes later, ticket in hand, my host and I were madly racing down the track to the end of the train. My hostess followed, accompanied by the agent, who had suddenly remembered a telegram commanding him to produce a W.C.T.U. speaker who was lost somewhere. They were both protesting: " You must not get on! You are the speaker! Say, there! " We two ahead, being the more agile, ran up the steps of the caboose. A sign, " Private," was on the door, but we did not let that trouble us. The whistle blew, my host jumped off, and I was moving.

As the train passed the station, three young men who had been loading freight jumped on the rear end of the caboose. The agent did not have time to warn them that his fleeing W.C.T.U. speaker was aboard. They came in like a battery galloping into action. Then they made a sudden horrified halt.

" Good morning," I said pleasantly. My pleasantness was not contagious. " It's rather cool, isn't it? "

At this one of them began mechanically to stir the fire, never taking his eyes from my face. They had received the shock of their lives. They stood watching me with the most indescribable and involved expressions.

The situation was relieved by my suitcase falling over. The conductor looked at it and smiled, and exclaimed, " Say, where did you come from? "

"What makes you think I did not come from around here?" I asked severely.

"Well, in the first place you ain't bobbed your hair, and then"—he pointed to my suitcase, where "Hongkong to Shanghai" told the secret.

Equanimity being restored, the three arranged themselves on one side of the caboose and I on the other, and there was perfect harmony and enjoyment as we began our missionary meeting, with no limit on the time (a rare treat!). I easily led them to ramble up and down the fascinating kingdom of Thailand as I rhapsodized on and on. The ramblers looked sad as we approached each station and made a frantic flight out to load the freight. Nothing could have exceeded the energy and heartiness with which they returned to their seats. The train went, not rapidly, but with a rattle-like rapid motion, which did just as well, perhaps. One address finished, on we went to another, and still the interest was keen.

From addresses we went to tiger, elephant, and bear stories. They pounded their own and each other's knees in delight over the story of the old minister who put the tiger to flight by staring him in the eye and quoting Scripture. The conclusion of these stories brought me to the end of my journey.

The young minister at W—— met me at the station, as he had learned by telegram that his speaker was coming via the freight train. There was a wonderful meeting in a beautiful church.

Another Day

I have been very rude and cannot sleep without confessing. Today the telephone rang and a voice inquired: "Is this Mrs. Missionary? We would like you to come and tell us all about your work in Thailand. As our program is rather crowded, we have decided to give you ten minutes."

An icy pause, then I spoke—and, I fear me, without a word of thanks: "I will not come." There are surely bounds even to absurdity.

"But we have your name from the Board!" came back the

voice sweetly. It is a melancholy fact that not a few people think that I can condense the experiences of thirty-seven years into ten minutes and are loath to forgive me when I refuse. They would be less forgiving still if I tried.

A Third Day

"Oh, I'm sorry," said the agent when I went to buy my ticket this afternoon. "The train you want was taken off yesterday. No, there is no other train until tomorrow."

I was distressed, for here was a journey of over a hundred miles, and on the morrow were two very important Sunday appointments. My whole being seems to have resolved itself into an absorbing anxiety not to miss my appointments!

At three we started out in a rattling good Ford (I am now quoting). But accidents happen, even in the best of cars. A rim cut a tire; the spare tire was too small; the engine clogged — none of which had ever happened before. As night came on, the lights were dim, and persisted in going out altogether on the steep banks. The driver worked underneath, then on top, according to the greatest need. I haven't the proper mechanical vocabulary to relate the ills of that car, but they were various. However, when we went, we fairly sailed through town after town and drank up the long roads like water. At nine I stopped to telephone to my appointment that I was coming, hour uncertain, but at least in good time for the service.

Still Another Day

This Sunday has been the greatest of all our furlough. This morning I was the speaker at the women's praise service in our home and supporting church. Never shall I forget the inspiration of that great audience — the people dear to us as our own home folks. When I rose to face them I was panic-stricken. Suppose I should fail today, of all days! This fear soon passed and they bore me up, as they have always done, with a mighty volume of prayer. When I had finished, led by our pastor the congregation rose in a service of reconsecration. What a precious memory to carry back to Thailand and keep all my

life! I often wonder if the home churches realize just what it means to the missionary when he comes home to them! I shall never forget the consternation of surprise with which I once heard a church woman remark (and without the least embarrassment) that she had forgotten who their missionary was at the present time!

The Last Page

Tomorrow we sail away from New York to our home in Thailand. Somehow I can't seem to shed many tears over it. Of course it has been more than wonderful to have all the post-graduate work here. The doctor thinks he has never had such wonderful courses as in the University of Pennsylvania and here in New York. Everyone has been kindness itself to me in Columbia in the course of dietetics which I hope to put into practical use in the hospital in Thailand. Every class in the nurses' training school in the Presbyterian Hospital was opened to me. So it is not easy to express our gratitude and say farewell to these new friends whose help is going to mean so much to us in our own work these next few years.

Today I had my last interview with a reporter. I tried to tell him about the work, but he, poor chap, was in love with tigers. Like the boys on the freight train, he was greatly taken with the minister and his tiger. I could hardly pull him away long enough to give him a few glimpses of what we were really going to Thailand for. Finally, in parting, he asked with great pride, "And what do you think of New York?" I hesitated, because New York people seem somewhat puzzled and discomfited over the opinions of outsiders. So I told him my opinion would be best hidden from all human knowledge. Thus we parted friends, and he gave me nearly a column in his paper.

A furlough is a great adventure of rapidly moving from place to place with no abiding place. It's an adventure from which every missionary turns gladly back to his adopted land, with a happy sigh of relief and anticipation of years of solid work and renewed strength to do it.

II

Four Months in a Suitcase

The great marvel about that suitcase was that while at least one article was left in each stopping place it grew increasingly difficult to close; in fact, it was necessary to sit on it each time. It opened like an infant bomb, but after all in this tour it was only an incident, a side show. Mrs. Missionary spoke in several states and the queen of Sheba surely was not more royally entertained than was she in homes with lovely guest chambers, perfectly appointed, with beautifully embroidered bed fittings, sometimes so exquisite that the guest almost felt impelled to sleep under the bed, like the Hoosier soldier boy whose mother welcomed him home with two feather beds! And at dinner Mrs. Missionary sometimes foresaw that when she returned to Thailand she would find it hard not to regret the good things she had left behind on the tables of our hostesses!

For the most part her speaking was at church services, missionary societies, guilds, and presbyterial meetings. It was a real joy to see the fine work these women are carrying on in the homeland. In the address of welcome at one meeting these sentiments were expressed: " We have all put on our new gowns and spring hats and come to this meeting with a feeling of keen joy and anticipation. The time was when we used to feel that going to a missionary meeting was a dull affair indeed [Mrs. Missionary gasped. She did not know there was anything dull connected with missions!] but now we associate it with things enterprising — well-prepared, spicy papers, reports full of ' pep.' Each woman is a spoke in a great wheel." A little later the speaker said, " We must all have a good stiff backbone."

The figures of speech are a bit mixed, to be sure, but the

sentiment is fine. Is it not quite typical of the new place missions have in the lives of our women?

As to her trip Mrs. Missionary has a confused remembrance of a suitcase, increasingly bulging; of hastening to catch trains; of cordial welcomes into beautiful homes, pressing dresses, being introduced, speaking, feasting, sleeping a wink or two, madly packing, farewells! Of course, it was all perfectly simple, but somehow Mrs. Missionary had to take a few minutes each day to gather up her scattered wits and arrange her mind and thus bring away some real impressions — for instance, the wonderful executive ability of the presidents, calm, dignified, graceful, and always saying the right thing in the right place. The treasurers too had their characteristic stamp — few words but to the point. "We have it to do and we are going to do it," one treasurer said when someone protested that the New Era apportionment was too large. Another said, "The women of our church always have done and always will do their part." The money grows in their hands as it did in Joseph's. A deep consecration combined with rare business ability is their precious talent.

It was a great joy to meet many children. In one small town the oldest inhabitant could not remember that they had ever had a missionary. Two little maids waited anxiously in one front hall for the missionary to come down; they had been at school when she arrived. Heaven only knows what kind of celestial vision they expected to see float down the stairs! "Are you the missionary?" they duetted in an awed tone as she hurried down. Poor children, they had expected an angel with wings! Mrs. Missionary finally persuaded them how really impracticable it would be for a missionary to travel with wings and comforted them with tiger and elephant stories. They confided to her that they thought her dress was pretty, and later they decided themselves to go as missionaries to Thailand!

In her audiences, from presbyterial meetings to afternoon teas, Mrs. Missionary thought she recognized three distinct

classes of women. First, there are those who have caught a real vision of the Great Commission as clearly as did Peter on that calm early morning when Jesus said for the third time, "Lovest thou me?" This great vision has made radiant their faces. To speak before such women is like touching the golden strings of some exquisite harp which gives back a response that inspires the soul. Tears sometimes fall as their hearts are touched by the sad, sad story which must ever come from lands where real love is unknown. These women are the Lord's remembrancers. Would any wise man like to say just what would have become of the cause of missions if it had not been for such women as these? One of them prayed, "Help us to remember to pray for the missionaries without ceasing, for they do not always have time to pray for themselves." It is a blessed thought which in trial and disappointment on the field gives strength. Songs in the night will indeed come from our lips when we remember how these women are praying for us.

The second class are interested in missions, to be sure. They know there must be something in it because they see the living interest of the Lord's remembrancers, but the real vision is not yet theirs. They follow with interest as a missionary speaks, but a puzzled expression comes to their faces when the deep spiritual things are told.

Then there is a third class, met mostly at teas and social affairs. These listen if the speaker has personal magnetism enough to get their attention and hold it, but it is a battle royal. When the speaker makes this tremendous effort, looking at these women she is tempted to say to herself, in the slang of the day, "Nobody home!" Sometimes women of this type ask such questions as: "Dear Mrs. Missionary, how can you love those dreadful people with their bare feet? It does seem so perfectly awful that they have no shoes!" And another invariable question: "Are you going back? And do you *really* want to go?"

In answer to these questions Mrs. Missionary always told

this story: The day before we left Thailand, ten of the older women of the church came to our home. As they had all made their farewell calls, we wondered why they had come again. The oldest woman rose with great dignity and said: "Dr. and Mrs. Missionary, you are going on a long journey. The war is on, and there are many dangers. We have come to pray God to watch over you on the road, make you rested and strong again, and return you to us." There has never been a day since when they have forgotten to pray for us. Over a hundred people waved us farewell when we left the station the next morning. They are our chosen people. We love them; they love us. Of course we are going to return and we really want to!

For these women of the third class Mrs. Missionary has a deep pity. They do not know. Of course the women who are in the "don't know" class are there because they want to be, for with the great wealth of mission literature surely anyone can get the vision.

For the women of the second and first classes Mrs. Missionary has great love. They will never know how precious their prayers and interest are for the women who are called to labor in the foreign field. And when in the faraway land trials come and the day is long and dreary, perhaps the sunshine of God's love bursts upon them, and then they know that some of the Lord's remembrancers have prayed for them, the prayers have risen to the throne of grace, and God has sent the answer to the far-off field!

III

The Joys of Farewell

When Dr. and Mrs. Missionary had been home from Thailand not quite three weeks, the latter was honored by being

invited to speak to the Volunteer Band of Park College. The lovely girlish president introduced her very gracefully, but innocently made one mistake. However, no one but a missionary could possibly have guessed the error. The president said, "Here is Mrs. Missionary, just fresh from Thailand."

A truer introduction would be, "Here is Mrs. Missionary, who has not the slightest idea of what will interest, but we shall now listen while she translates a few thoughts from Thai into quaint English." For after an absence of six years or more, is it at all amazing that one feels rather a stranger in one's own tongue? Perhaps someday someone will write a book on "A Stranger in His Own Household," to tell the secret of the corrugated and farseeing expression in the missionary's eye as he madly searches for some missing English. His most horrible night vision is, "Up before his home church and not able to recall a word of English."

When people at home plan a year's trip, they shut up the house, farm out the cat, and go. A missionary's furlough, however, is preceded by much ceremony, and the older he is the greater the functions. This is the Oriental's way of showing his appreciation. Perhaps no question is asked oftener than this, "Do the people really appreciate what you are doing for them?" These farewells show that perhaps more clearly than anything else. They are familiar enough to those on the field, but that people at home may have an answer to that most frequent of all questions about appreciation, here is a little story of four reels:

Reel One

Scene I. Spacious assembly room of Kenneth Mackenzie Memorial Boys' School at Lampang, Thailand, brilliantly lighted and beautifully decorated. Boy Scouts guard the door and salute smartly as the hero and heroine of the occasion arrive in their motor car. They are in evening dress and are conducted at once to the seat of honor. The room is crowded with

gaily dressed people and it appears to be a real function. The curtain goes up, and on the stage is a large chorus of handsome boys, very natty in their new school uniforms. These proceed to sing the praises of the hero and heroine, how for two years they have acted as their principals and brought the school to such success. (The principals do not recognize themselves always but do not argue with the chorus.)

Scene II. A very tall, dignified gentleman, the Thai principal of the school, is giving an oration on what the boys have given in song, only he goes down to microscopic details.

Scene III. A recent college graduate appears and gives a second oration, same subject but according to Shakespeare, of whom he is a great admirer. (If only these doubting Thomases that are always taking the joy out of life for the furloughed missionary could have been present, they would have been subdued into silence for once before this avalanche of eloquent appreciation!) Now the ones addressed do not care so much for the laudation (which indeed seems a bit embarrassing at times), but the fact that these two splendid men realize the spirit in which the service has been rendered is truly inspiring. The heroine is then called to the stage, and amid great applause is presented with a beautiful silver bowl inscribed:

"Most cordial greetings to Dr. and Mrs. Crooks from the teachers and boys of the K.M.M. School, Lampang."

Reel Two

Scene I. Two large rooms decorated with potted ferns and cut roses. The rooms are ready for a tea party. Two Thai boys in stiff white are bringing in the tea things. In the room above a woman is frantically putting the last touches to her toilet. She claps on her hat and runs down to the room below as the first guests arrive half an hour ahead of time. (Keeping time is optional in an outstation, and one person's time is as good as another's.) The host appears and soon a shower of beautifully dressed ladies and well-groomed men are gathered

around the tea tables. This is the English community, who have come to say good-by and have given an hour of their precious exercise time to show their appreciation. It is a distinguished company, and to put it in the words of our English reporter, " Everyone that is anyone is present." An hour later, as promptly as they came, they depart to their club for golf, tennis, and polo.

Scene II. Same rooms an hour later. Another distinguished company is around the tea tables. Thai officials splendid in their decorations, army officers in full regalia, dignified Chinese and Burmese in their picturesque costumes, the feudal prince and his beautiful princess in her semiforeign toilet are sitting chatting around the tables. A cosmopolitan scene it is, with people gathered from the ends of the earth. The boys are flying here and there with trays of tea and cakes. There are many beautiful parting gifts, for it is difficult for the Oriental to say good-by and not give a visible token of his good will. It has not been easy for these officials and others to come — it has meant offices closed early and business and social engagements canceled — but this helps to answer the question, " Now, really, just tell me in secret, you know, and I will never mention it to a soul — do the people really appreciate you? "

Reel Three

Scene I. Two rooms decorated and set for a tea. A hundred women are arranging themselves and their babies on the chairs, in wide window seats and on the steps of the open stairs. The scene presents an animated spring garden of peonies, roses, and iris on a stroll. One hundred pairs of eyes are turned on three dignified women in the seat of honor, the Bible women. Each one of the trio rises in turn, bows gracefully, and makes an animated speech. The women lean forward, listening in breathless interest, until some seem ready to topple off their chairs or pitch headlong down the stairs. As the third one sits down, a hundred women rise and begin to fumble in the belts of their

skirts. One hundred little moneybags are produced and waved about. The annual thank offering is made for their foreign mission work in Yünnan Province, China. If only inset pictures could be shown to Mr. and Mrs. Doubting Thomas and family of one hundred little homes and the sad but willing sacrifices of these offerings!

Scene II. The rooms are crowded with men and women; the teapot is bubbling; there is much good cheer and fellowship. The members of the city church, their pastor and elders, the doctors and nurses from the hospital, teachers in the two schools, Chinese church members, all have come to say good-by. The tea things speed to the kitchen and the deceitful baby organ, which has been masquerading all this time under a cloth as a perfectly good tea table, is exposed. The Thai pastor arises in the midst of his flock and proceeds to lead in a farewell service of praise and prayer.

Reel Four

One Scene Only: The southbound express of the Royal Thai railways is making preparation to depart. All the characters of the former reels are present in one grand finale, and are standing in groups or walking to and fro. The much "farewelled" couple goes from group to group for the last good-by. What a picture as the train moves slowly out of the cheering crowd — the Thai governor and his staff, the English community, the boys' school, all standing grandly at salute, the Christian community with their pastor, the Thai doctor with his staff, and many others. The train passes round the bend, and inside a compartment two people are sitting conversing earnestly: "Well, I wish all the Doubting Thomas family that we are to meet at home were present to see the answer to their maddening question of 'Now my dear, you don't suppose for one instant, do you, that those people really appreciate you?'"

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